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ESSAYS ON
THE SOCIAL GOSPEL

BY

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PREFACE

An address which I delivered at the Evangelical-Social Congress at Darmstadt during Whitsun-week 1903 is here presented in an expanded form, with considerable alterations; and I hope the matter at issue is thereby brought into greater prominence. The subject proposed for discussion at the Congress was the relation between the moral ideas of Jesus and the development of social morality to-day. But to the Christian community at the present time it is of far greater consequence that it should first of all attain and firmly grasp the point of view without which it is impossible for these ideas of Jesus to be understood.

The purpose of the following pages is to show that the moral directions of Jesus are not complex in their demands, but require of us simply that one thing that can alone bestow upon the will singleness of aim, and produce in us a steadfast, independent attitude of mind. His words are too often used by Christians,

not as means to the attainment of that free and independent will, but as regulations of unquestioned authority because they proceed from the mouth of Jesus. Yet such an application of them is actual revolt against them.

We cannot set aside as unimportant the fact that Jesus sought to lead beyond such indolent obedience those He had joined to Himself. To understand aright that aspect of His work is to see the moral consciousness of man finding in Him its consummation; and if we altogether fail to see that, we cannot experience the Person of Jesus as in any real sense the power of redemption. Such a power working in us Jesus does indeed become if, not merely receiving the doctrine as a glorious tradition, by our own experience we prove the truth of the claim He made, that in Him sinful men should find strength and peace. For this the prime essential is that this wonderful assurance of Jesus should be a fact apprehended by us ourselves in such a way that it can never be forgotten.

To Paul, and the community he represented, it was a fact conveyed in the words of Jesus, spoken at the Last Supper. But to ourselves it can come home as a compelling fact only

when the words of Jesus reveal to us that spirit which enables us to gain independence in the inward man—that is to say, true life. Unless we have found in Jesus this way to discipline and freedom within, it will be impossible that we should experience His Person as the way that guides us to the Father. Without full reverence, perfect trust cannot exist; but the access unto God that is ours through Jesus consists in an absolute confidence in Himself which means deliverance from the horrors of spiritual isolation. Unless we have had proof of this, we might, indeed, go on talking of a drama of Redemption, performed long ages ago; but we should have no right to say that He Himself is the Redeemer Whose power we now experience. Thus the preaching of the Gospel must needs become a mere lifeless repetition or spiritual incoherence, if there is increasing failure to understand Jesus in the power of His spirit, or the meaning of His law.

W. HERRMANN.

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THE EVANGELICAL SOCIAL MISSION IN THE LIGHT OF THE HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

This paper was read on May 17, 1894, at the Evangelical Social Congress held at Frankfort-am-Main, and published in "Prussian Annals," vol. 76 (1894), No. 3, in "Evangelical Social Writings of A. Harnack and H. Delbrük," H. Walther, Berlin, 1896, and in Harnack's "Addresses and Essays," vol. ii., Giessen, 1904.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

In the year 1694, H. A. Francke was profoundly moved by the saying of the Apostle Paul: "God is able to make all grace abound toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may abound to every good work." The words henceforth never lost their hold over him, but became the source and impulse of his activity. The origin of very much that has since been done in our country in the name of Christian charity may be dated from that time, and the bold confidence expressed in the Apostle's words has led to the accomplishment of projects that at one time appeared impossible.

And now, after two hundred years, there is again especial need of that same confidence. It is not that we belong, as did Francke, to a Church in which the duty of Christian charity is neglected, but that the nature of that duty itself has clearly changed, and is now

so new and so vast that all our old methods appear inadequate. It seems to be no longer a problem with which individuals can deal, and the principal object of this Congress is to take counsel together, with a view to right action. While particular points require to be discussed on the lines appropriate to each, it is essential to have the whole question set clearly before us, to see plainly what it is we are aiming at, and examine the means at our disposal. We are not, however, now concerned with the problem of social questions in general, but with the duty of the Church and the Christian community.

Such a duty is obvious if we are to apply the Gospel to present circumstances, and I can easily understand the radical tendency of some who would exclude all remoter matters. It is true that historical retrospect is not always free from danger. A good steersman must look ahead, not behind ; and a backward glance over the past may check bold action, and see impossibilities where really it is only a question of difficulties. Furthermore, history can never throw light on the path that lies before us. Among the members of this Congress, however, there will be no doubt that the social mission of the Church to-day can be deter-

mined only by the help of history, not merely because this is a guide to the shallows and reefs to be avoided, but still more because the different churches in all their aspects, including that of charitable societies, are, in their gradual growth, historic institutions. Unless we are prepared to undervalue all the experience gained in the course of history, we must make up our minds to preserve the links between the present and the past.

Before proceeding to deal with the problem itself, I must call attention to a fact that may well inspire us with hope and gladness. Throughout the whole civilised world questions are now being discussed concerning economic arrangements and the relations between capital and labour; this is in itself proof that much social work has already been accomplished. It is not long since culture, rights and human dignity were the monopoly of some few thousands amongst all the inhabitants of Europe, while the great masses of people lived dreary lives under tyrannous oppression, possessing neither rights nor education, their whole existence being one long misery. To-day, on the contrary,—at least in our own country, and among many other kindred nations,—all citizens are equal in the eyes of the law; all enjoy the

same legal protection; slavery and serfdom are things of the past; a fair amount of knowledge and education are within the reach of all; and labour is respected. Liberty, Equality and Fraternity are in many ways no mere empty words, but the real framework of our individual and social life, the pillars of the building we are raising. All this has been accomplished in the lifetime of a few generations, and it is absurd to question the fact of progress, amidst improvements so obvious and immense.

Yet the retort is frequently made: What in practice have this Liberty, this Equality, this Fraternity proved to be? Have we not been deceived by them in the past? Do they not, on the one hand, threaten us with the rule of ignorance and folly, and, on the other hand, are they not mere catchwords, deprived of real meaning by the dependence of Labour upon that Capital which it does not itself possess? The truth,—say these pessimists,—is that the old oppression still prevails,—in a different cloak, it may be, but, for all that, in an aggravated form; the worst kind of servitude is rife; legal equality, besides being imperilled by the existence of Capital, is at best but a negative good; and education for the masses is a mere possibility, of which they cannot avail them-

selves! Nominally we are all equal; but in reality a minority lives as before at the expense of a vast majority, whose members are still consumed by cares, and find the rights they have won to be in part but a niggardly instalment of their dues, and at the same time a mockery of their helpless condition.

Those who argue thus are not wholly wrong, but they are not right. The above-mentioned blessings, in which all are supposed to share, may indeed be, and to some extent really are, mere delusions. But just try to remove them now, or even to imagine that they do not exist! They are great and lasting possessions, won with effort, and none the less valuable because not all-sufficient. Blessings they still would be, even though at the present time they should result in intensifying economic difficulties. Retrogression is no longer possible for us; and shame upon those who desire it! Let us rather rejoice in having already achieved much that, a few generations ago, seemed but an empty dream.

I must now, after these introductory remarks, ask you to follow me in a historical retrospect. Before entering upon this, however, it is necessary to consider the underlying historical question of the general attitude of

the Gospel towards social arrangements. We shall then glance at the successive epochs of ecclesiastical history, and finally endeavour to answer the question, What is the social mission of the Church of to-day ?

CHAPTER II

GENERAL ATTITUDE OF THE GOSPEL TOWARDS SOCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

The Gospel is the glad tidings of benefits that pass not away. In it are the powers of eternal life; it is concerned with repentance and faith, with regeneration and a new life; its end is redemption, not social improvement. Therefore it aims at raising the individual to a standpoint far above the conflicts between earthly success and earthly distress, between riches and poverty, lordship and service. This has been its meaning to earnest Christians of all ages, and those who are unable to appreciate this idea, fail to appreciate the Gospel itself. The indifference to all earthly affairs, which proceeds from the conviction that we possess life eternal, is an essential feature of Christianity. It is the result of a twofold mental attitude, which may be summed up in the following words: "Fear not, be not anxious; the very hairs of your head are all num-

bered"; and "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." In accordance with these two precepts two principles arise. One may be called the tranquil, quietistic principle, and the other, the radical; the former impels men to acquiesce, with faith and resignation, in the whole course of the world, whatever it may be, or, however it may develop, while the latter urges them to renounce the world, and live for something new. In the Gospel itself, then, a problem is thus presented, for it is obvious that between the tranquil and the radical principles there is a possibility of conflicts. Indeed, the radical principle, where it predominates to the exclusion of the other, allows of further subdivision according as it finds expression in one of two ways,—either in complete renunciation of the world, or in the attempt to do away with all the existing ordinances of the world, as being all impregnated by sin, combined with an endeavour to establish a new order of world. History will show us how, through directing one-sided attention to one or other of these principles, instead of harmonising the two, Christians have evaded the difficulty.

But the same Gospel which preaches a holy indifference to earthly things, embraces yet

another principle: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." This spirit of love likewise is to be a guiding rule of the character built up by the Gospel. Accordingly Christianity originally took the form of a free brotherhood,—a form essential to its very nature, for, after trust in God, the very essence of religion is brotherly love. In addition, then, to the quietistic and radical principles we have a third,—the social, active principle. I give it this name of a social, active principle, because the Gospel nowhere teaches that our relations to the brethren should be characterised by a holy indifference. Such indifference expresses rather what the individual soul should feel towards the world with all its weal and woe. Whenever it is question of one's neighbour, the Gospel will not hear of this indifference, but, on the contrary, preaches always love and mercy. Further, the Gospel regards as absolutely inseparable the temporal and spiritual needs of the brethren. It draws no fine distinctions between body and soul; sickness is always sickness, and want is want. Thus, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink." Again, when it is a question of giving signs to prove that the promises of God have now been fulfilled, it is said: "The blind see, the lame

walk—, . . . and to the poor the Gospel is preached"; while in the Gospel of the Hebrews we read in the story of the rich young man: "Behold many of thy brethren, sons of Abraham, are clad with dung, dying with hunger, and thy house is full of much goods, and there goeth out therefrom nought at all unto them."* Thus, in the simplest and most emphatic terms possible, Christians are urged to help the needy and the miserable with all the strength of love. But it is to the rich that the most earnest exhortation is addressed. While it is assumed that wealth tends to make its possessors hard-hearted and worldly, they are warned that their perilous possessions impose upon them the highest responsibility.

A new spectacle was presented to the world: religion hitherto had either clung to what was earthly, adapting itself readily to things as it found them, or else built in the clouds, and set itself up in opposition to everything; but now it had a new duty—to scorn earthly want and misery, and earthly prosperity alike, and yet to relieve distress of every kind; to raise its head to heaven in the courage of its faith, and yet with heart and hand and voice

* Nicholson's standard translation: but Saunders' in "What is Christianity?" might be preferred.

to labour for the brethren upon earth. The task thus set them has never been wholly abandoned by Christians, who consequently, have held fast the conviction that no economic system can oppose to the mission of Christianity a really insuperable obstacle, while, on the other hand, no economic system can ever release it from its duties.

But does not the Gospel contain much more than this? Does it not include definite teaching on the subject of temporal welfare, and a definite social and economic programme? So indeed men have believed, both in the early ages of Christianity, in the Middle Age, and at the present time; and yet the belief is wrong. Undoubtedly the Gospel contains definite teaching concerning temporal good, but none that could be summed up in the form of national economic laws, and consequently no economic programme. Only if the Gospel or the New Testament be regarded as a legal code, can social and political laws be found in it; but we have no right to regard it thus, and any attempt to do so will speedily end in failure. It is unauthorised, because our faith is the religion of liberty, and its duties are specially imposed upon you, and upon me, and upon every age, as an individual problem for each to solve.

And it must needs end in failure, because no self-consistent economic precepts can possibly be derived from the New Testament. Are we, in accordance with the story of the rich young man, to sell all that we have? Or are we, at least, not to lay up treasures for ourselves? Or are we, as taught by the Apostle Paul, to turn to profit every gift, wealth and property included, but so as to convert them into instruments of service? May a Christian never settle vexed questions of inheritance? Is it right for him to make large outlay only, as in the Gospel story, on ointments; or is this always justifiable? May he, or may he not, keep money in a strong-box? "Labour, working with your hands the thing which is good, that you may have to give to him that needeth": that surely is the gist of the matter, and firm resistance must be offered to all attempts to read into the Gospel any other social ideal than this: "You are accountable to God for all the gifts you have received, and so for your possessions also; you are bound to use them in the service of your neighbour." Anything in the Gospel that seems to point in any other direction is merely apparent contradiction, or is relevant only to some particular case, or results from the undeveloped economic conditions and special

historical circumstances of the time in which the Gospel arose. An age in which capital was almost always hoarded in a useless way, as a dead thing, cannot be compared with an age in which it is the greatest economic power; and an age which believed the end of the world to be approaching is not to be compared with one which recognises as sacred the duty of working for the future.

But conversely, it does not at all follow from the lack of economic precepts in the Gospel, that the matter is one which does not concern a Christian. On the contrary, where he clearly perceives that any economic condition has become a source of distress to his neighbour, he is bound to seek for a remedy, for he is a disciple of the Saviour. If a man falls into the water, one may help him by simply pulling him out; but if any one is imprisoned in a burning house, the exits being fast closed, the only way to help him is to effect a change in the circumstances: that is to say, to extinguish the fire. The question whether such an act belongs to Christian economics, or is simply and solely Christian, or should rather be called humane, may be left to those who delight in argument. Love knows that it is always bound to help in such a way as to render real assistance.

The Church has from the first availed itself of three means of helping the brethren and relieving misery and want; and the same three methods are still at its command. The first of these consists in rousing the individual conscience, in such a way as to awaken strong, regenerate, self-sacrificing personalities. This is the all-important thing; but the means to such an end vary; as the Lord's method of teaching shows, it may either begin within, and work outwards, or it may penetrate from without to the inmost being. But the vital point is that there should be a Christ-like personality, and that in every action the power of love from one person to another should operate, and make itself felt. The kingdom of God must be built upon the foundation, not of institutions, but of individuals in whom God dwells and who are glad to live for their fellow men.

The second method consists in converting every congregation of individuals into a community full of active charity, and bound together by brotherly love; for without such a bond all effort is sporadic. This fellowship was strongest in the early days of the Church, and the consciousness that Christianity cannot exist upon earth in any other form never altogether

passed away, although, as we shall see, it became enfeebled.

Then there is still the third line of action. Religion is not independent in its growth; even if it takes refuge in solitude, it must enter into some relation with the arrangements of the world as it finds them, and it cannot regard with indifference the nature of these ordinances. It was, indeed, at a time when extortion and violence were common, and slavery and tyrannical oppression prevailed, that the Apostles instructed the faithful to "take no anxious thought." But at the same time they at once began to exert their influence against so much of the existing order of things as was in fact disorder and sin. Christians were urged so to walk that their example should both make others ashamed and incite them to imitation. Only a few decades later, representatives of Christianity were presenting petitions to the emperors and the governors of provinces, and addressing written appeals to society, demanding the abolition of gross and flagrant abuses and outrages. But, as far as I can see, the limit of their interference was clearly defined: it did not occur to them to propose economic improvements, or to attack fixed institutions,

such as slavery. What they demanded was the suppression of such sin and shame as could not but be recognised as sins and scandals even by a Greek or Roman conscience. They were convinced that the divine image in man cannot be destroyed by oppression and suffering of any kind (never was there an age of less sentimentality with regard to want and misery than the early days of Christianity); but that it is effaced by uncleanness and sensuality, and that therefore conditions which plainly tended in that direction,—for example, a tolerated and privileged unchastity, secret murder, exposing of children, and wholesale prostitution,—are altogether intolerable.

This brings us to a most important point. At the present time Christianity is being reproached with never, at any time in its history, having taken the lead in economic reforms. Even if the facts were in accordance with this sweeping statement, it would be no real reproach, in view of the distinctive character of the Christian religion.

It is enough if religion prepares men's minds for great economic changes and revolutions; if it foresees the new moral duties which these impose; if it knows how to adapt itself to them, and perceives the right moment

at which to step in with its forces, and do its work. A religion which aims at saving the soul and transforming the inner man, and which regards a change in outward circumstances as but a small matter in comparison with the power of evil, can only follow in the wake of earthly changes and exercise an after-influence; it is not qualified to lead the way in economic developments.

To be sure, that is not the conclusion of the whole matter. It is undeniable that the greatest danger of Churches once established has always been lest they should become in a bad sense conservative and indolent, and should hide this indolence under cover of very lofty conceptions of their creed. Instead of helping their poor brother, they preach to him that "pious indifference" with which individuals should regard their own earthly fortunes. Even in the days when the Epistle of St. James was written, Christians would say to a destitute brother: "God help you!"—and yet give him nothing. The other-worldly aspect of religion was exploited to such an extent that love in this world was forgotten, or, in other words, the present world was not forgotten, but love was.

It is no mere coincidence that from the very

beginning this perverted quietism has always had as its counterpart the tendency which I have called radicalism. If indifference towards all earthly matters is to take the place of love in determining our relations with our neighbours, there is at least as much justification for radicalism as for quietism. Therefore let all earthly possessions be forsaken, divided equally, or held in common! The fantastic idea, derived from antiquity, of Communism in matters economic, has always clung to the Church like a shadow, faint at one time, at another more distinct. Combined with thoughts of complete renunciation of this world, or with material hopes of another world, it seemed to offer the best solution to the problem of the evangelical-social mission of the Church, and at the same time declared war against indolent indifference. The idea, though naïvely conceived, and never really carried out, or capable of being carried out, was valuable in so far as it stirred up easy-going Christians, called attention to faults in the prevailing economic order, and modified obstinate ideas of individual ownership; but the merits were outweighed by the disadvantages of the movement. Wherever it attempted to practise its theories—indeed, wherever it was able to gain a hearing at all—the result was to

make men blind to the duties nearest at hand and within their powers; it always undervalued the simple, personal acts of charity in the interests of its own institutions, supposed to be capable of overcoming all evil, and eventually it degenerated into the opposite of its own ideals, its "heaven upon earth" becoming a degradation of religion. Moreover, in those ages of the Church in which the communistic theory was most common, religion was most selfish. For the strongest motive that impelled towards Communism was scarcely ever brotherly love; it was at one time a desire to escape from the world, incompatible with concern for one's fellow men; at another time, a longing for earthly welfare, encouraged by the self-deluding belief that heaven could be established upon earth.

I have tried to describe briefly the moral attitude of the Christian religion towards social questions, and at the same time to call attention to points at which an overstraining of certain ideas was bound to lead to unfortunate developments. Let us now turn our attention to history.

CHAPTER III

HISTORICAL RETROSPECT

ANY one attempting to describe the attitude of primitive Christians in social matters must above all be careful to distinguish between sayings, discourses, mere exclamations, and even theories, on the one hand, and deeds on the other—a difference not always sufficiently borne in mind. In theory and profession we find an inextricable medley of conservatism and radicalism—experimental ideas, so to say; everything seems to be pervaded by a radical sentiment, which was influenced by "pious indifference" and the prospect of the approaching end of the world. Therefore such sayings as these are often found: "Let no man call anything his own"; "We have all things in common"; "Forsake all earthly possessions."

And in times of special stress and severe persecution, such words were here and there followed by deeds: some congregation, with a fanatic as leader, actually would sell everything,

or go out into the wilderness. In Asia Minor, indeed, there were enthusiast prophets who, for the space of some twenty years, succeeded in overturning the natural order of things by persuading thousands of individuals and several whole congregations to forsake the world. The further tendency to organise a communism, obviously modelled on Plato's "Republic," is noticeable in various small heretical communities, without referring to the similar attempt at Jerusalem, of which we have no clear account. Such impulses are, however, no criterion of the general feeling of the time. In the main current of the development of the Church, the whole movement was calm, strong, purposeful —moderate in the best sense of the word. In the most authoritative and widely-read writings we find the subject treated in such terms as the following, taken from the "Epistle of the Church of Rome to the Church of Corinth." * "So in our case let the whole body be saved in Christ Jesus, and let each man be subject unto his neighbour, according as also he was appointed with his special grace. Let not the strong neglect the weak, and let the weak respect the strong. Let the rich minister aid to the poor, and let the poor give thanks to

* Lightfoot's Translation.

God, because he hath given him one through whom his wants may be supplied. Let the wise display his wisdom, not in good words, but in good works. He that is lowly in mind, let him not bear testimony to himself, but leave testimony to be borne to him by his neighbour. He that is pure in the flesh, let him be so, and not boast, knowing that it is Another who bestoweth his continence upon him." Could anything be more moderate?

But in one point, undoubtedly, all Christians worthy of the name were radical, namely, in their opposition to the world of idolatry, of impurity, of sensuality, of debasing pleasures, of cruelty and of hardheartedness, by which they were surrounded. "To keep themselves unspotted from the world" was for the early Christians the highest solution of the "social question in primitive Christian days." To fight against this world of sin, to suffer and to die rather than be entangled in it—this was the fundamental principle. In this war against sin, they occasionally went a step further, and protested against all that in any way concerns the world and the flesh. But surely it is better that a man should despise the blessings of this life than disgrace himself by abusing them! Those ascetics and martyrs in the fight they

fought were fighting for each one of us; they died in order that the world of immorality might perish, or at all events might hide itself in darkness; that at least the vilest and coarsest elements might disappear from the culture and the civilisation that we ourselves have inherited. Philosophers of the highest eminence had spoken and written in fine language of the dignity of man; but they had winked at idolatry, and they did not possess the force of Puritanism against either idols or open immorality. But now had appeared a society able to convert into power and action its message concerning the worth of the immortal soul and the divine sonship of all mankind.

Next to purity of morals, brotherly love was the outstanding characteristic of this society, and we find everything subordinated to the main purpose of binding together individual congregations and the whole body of Christians into one fellowship, ever ready to help its own members and the world around. It was with this end in view that the general organisation of congregations, to the extent of including bishops and deacons, assumed definite form, and developed with such wonderful precision and variety. The bond of brotherhood must not merely imply common worship, but

must embrace all the relations of life. Nothing of the sort had yet been seen; and no institution could be compared with it except, perhaps, that of synagogues scattered about the kingdom; but these were limited to one nation, and were less closely bound together. From the religious standpoint there was a real levelling of nationalities, ranks and classes in the Christian congregation, and a true manifestation of that equality which consists in the common possession of spiritual and eternal blessings. Slaves were entrusted with the most influential offices in the Church, and the honour and dignity of women were protected, chastity being a fundamental principle in "renunciation of the world." Only think, for example, to what tender treatment of female slaves certain of the "Acts of the Martyrs" testify! But above all, the Gospel really was preached to the poor; that is to say, for the first time a spiritual religion was brought within the reach of all, even of the humblest classes. In order to fathom the full meaning of this, one must study the controversies between the heathen Celsus and the Christian Origen. Celsus admits, and approves of the fact, that Plato wrote only for the educated and the virtuous; his view is that only those answering to the Greek

"Aristocrats" can reach firm ground in regard to the highest questions of life. To Christians, on the contrary, the real proof of the superiority and truth of their religion lies in the fact that it applies to all sorts and conditions of men: it is not only the religion of compassion, but the religion of humanity. The eighteenth century simply rediscovered what had already been the possession of Christians in the second century.

It is especially noteworthy that the arrangements for doing practical works of love were very closely associated with those of divine worship. In the same place in which heavenly gifts were received, earthly ones were given as well; in the same place in which people were called upon to offer their souls and bodies a living sacrifice to God, they offered their earthly gifts for the needs of the brethren. This was indeed an incentive to giving, and who need be ashamed to receive gifts straight from the hand of God! The same altar-table thus expressed the joint ideas of love to God and love to one's neighbour. This was the very heart of the "philosophy" which won the admiration of the pagans; and this, together with private deeds of charity, became the most potent means of propaganda.

"Where the common interest is concerned, they make no account of cost;" and again, "If one of them suffers, they regard it as something touching all." This is the testimony of the "scoffer," Lucian. No charitable institutions had as yet been established, but the whole body, the congregation, fulfilled the functions of a free institution for dispensing brotherly love and practical help.

At the same time the duty of work was inculcated. It was not that any special blessing was thought to rest upon labour, but work was recognised as a self-evident duty. Therefore it was incumbent upon the congregation to help the unemployed and poverty-stricken brethren to find work. "To the sick, give relief; to the sound, work," is the advice given in an ancient document. No legal maxim of the early Christians can be deduced from this; it is a statement of brotherly obligation. No one was then thinking of far-reaching preventive measures against poverty; for poverty was regarded as a fate, which charity was bound to soften. For a similar reason, the deep mistrust of the Mammon of unrighteousness rarely or never led to the formation of any general rules, wealth too being regarded as a fate, the serious consequences of which had to

be averted or at least mitigated by the exercise of love.

Political, legal and economic ordinances were in part recognised, in part merely tolerated. The subject was taught respect for the Emperor and for all in authority, and the slave for his master, while conversely the Christian master was to see in his slave a fellow Christian. As there were no republican tendencies in early Christianity, so too there were no efforts to bring about the emancipation of slaves. At the same time it is true that Tertullian did not think it possible for an Emperor to be a Christian, and slavery was included among the institutions destined to perish with the wicked world.

The Christian was, as far as possible, to leave public and political life alone; opinions and practice varied as to the exact degree in which he might take part in it, and could endeavour to reform it. Such disputes as could be decided without going beyond the congretion were not to be carried into the public law courts, and it was a matter of course that in questions concerning marriage and family life, the Church was to follow the principles of Christianity.

During the course of the second century a development of great consequence gradually

took place. From the beginning there had been voluntary teachers and missionaries who had made special sacrifices for the sake of their calling, enjoying at the same time special privileges and esteem; but now these disappeared, and their place was taken by elected and official presidents. These did indeed take upon themselves some of the obligations of the teachers they replaced, and thus give evidence of a high standard of morality; but the privileges of the teachers were theirs also, and they tended more and more to become the leaders of the congregations. These latter, meanwhile, having grown in size, lost their former character, and no longer depended upon the free co-operation of individual members with their different gifts, but became communities of leaders and their flocks, with a bishop at their head. It was a natural and a necessary development, but it tended to encourage two propensities hitherto held in check—the indolence of some, and the ambition of others, under whose control came the whole power and property of the Church. At the same time it was the beginning of a new class-distinction within the congregations, altogether irrespective of religious and moral qualifications.

Reference must still be made to one other point: brotherly love was not the sole motive for almsgiving; apart from that, to divest oneself of part of one's property was accounted as something good in itself. The idea of renunciation of the world began to find its way into the work involved in love of one's neighbour, and though it would be a mistake to be hypercritical in this matter (since living faith in a future world and in future bliss is always in itself a moral act, and such a faith was here the moving force), it cannot be denied that selfish aims and a false conception of "merit" were at work.

If we look further ahead, we find that the Church, which in the course of the third century had developed into a great, clerically-governed institution, entered in the fourth century into very close alliance with the State, and held in it a position of privilege.

In its theories with regard to property and economic arrangements, the Church was becoming more and more communistic, yet without going the whole length, and making the demand that men in general should give up all they possessed, or literally have everything in common. Almost all the great Fathers of the Church gave expression to utterances such as

these: "Private property is the root of all strife;" "Possession in common, that is, equal ownership, is the natural and original order of things;" "Beyond what a man requires for his absolute needs, all that he has belongs to the poor;" "The luxury of the rich is robbery of the poor;" "What the poor ask is not thine, but their own." But in the ultimate issue, all alike are unwilling to surrender the principle of voluntary action. Some, and notably Lactantius, do expressly speak of Plato's communism as mistaken, and others do not scruple to defend riches when rightly used.

Meanwhile, however, the general feeling seems to have tended towards a communism in which the wants of life should not be felt. How is this to be explained? Brotherly love was not the one clear, prominent motive; other motives were included. First, there was the old esteem for the contemplative life, with its few wants as compared with the active life; and the influence of Aristotle's "Law of Nature," and Plato's "Republic," in spite of the criticism to which the latter was subjected. Then there was the stern exigency of the time, which made it appear almost a deliverance to be rid of one's all at a single stroke. Even those who loved their wealth, but were groaning under the

unendurable pressure of taxation, might in the end prefer to cast away their fortune with their own hands rather than be ruined by slow degrees. Moreover, existing social conditions were so tyrannical and at the same time so precarious; the rich men, forming a new caste which was then growing up, were often so inhuman; and the old hereditary failing of the Romans, avarice and love of gain, had reached such a pitch that a person with a moderate degree of sensibility might well find life in such a world intolerable. Further considerations that must be taken into account are the old Christian distrust of the mammon of unrighteousness; the difficulty of answering the question as to the amount that ought to be given in charity; the conviction that all giving is meritorious, and effectual for the saving of the soul of the giver; and finally the supposed example in the Bible of the communistic Church at Jerusalem. All this is sufficient to explain the tendency towards communism and renunciation of the world.

But, as already pointed out, the result was not communism, but only voluntary almsgiving and donations, together with what was perhaps most important of all, a certain modification of the selfish Roman idea of proprietor-

ship. Property is a trust, held under definite moral conditions; this conception was forcing its way in. It is in history as in nature: an apparently enormous expenditure of power is required in order to produce a new result which is seemingly insignificant.

The practice of the Church itself was not at all in keeping with its communistic theories. Rather does it appear in the light of a great conservative power, itself embracing all the old ordinances, and so defending at the same time the economic order. Indeed, one may go still further, and say that when all else besides itself was falling into ruin, the Church, as a firmly established institution, was eventually able to turn to its own almost exclusive advantage the legal and economic order of the decadent Roman Empire. Thus, when slavery was becoming too costly an institution, and, in spite of the efforts of the State to prevent it, serfs were gradually taking the place of slaves, the Church, while pressing upon its individual members the good work of emancipating slaves, was perhaps itself the last slave-owner. This was because it had gradually become the wealthiest landed proprietor, having obtained great privileges during the stormy times of the great migration of nations, when all private tenure was im-

perilled. It was an age of dissolution. "Populus Romanus moritur et ridet;" and amidst the general decline, the Church was the guardian of the former culture, and, like a great insurance company, treasured up all such wealth—spiritual, intellectual, and temporal—as was capable of longer existence, and, without arbitrarily changing it, transmitted it to new nations. That, it may now be said, was the social function of the Church at that time. It did not reform, but it preserved. From that day to this, the Church, as an organised body, has felt called upon rather to discover and preserve the good forces yet extant in old and moribund institutions than to disengage forces full of new life. Thus it took no part in determining the issue of the great economic revolution of that time, for one can scarcely ascribe any special influence to its prohibition of usury, which was commonly ignored.

The question suggests itself, How did it reconcile its practice with its theory? First, by means of a kind of fiction: we mean, the idea that it itself, with all its wealth, was nothing but an enormous society for the relief of the poor; and, secondly, by very great liberality in face of increasing poverty, together with numerous beneficent institutions, founded espe-

cially during the period from the fourth to the sixth centuries, in aid of the destitute of every kind. These great institutions, which excited the admiration even of the Emperor Julian, by degrees relieved the congregations of the work of caring for the poor; but the congregations as such were gradually disappearing, and were being replaced by episcopally governed parishes. In Germany, for example, congregational Christianity was never even seen. Such institutions did undoubted good, but they had entered upon a struggle with the misery of the masses, of which none could foresee the end; and among individual Christians the feeling that each one is responsible for the condition of his brother was becoming increasingly weaker. The more the Church dictated to the laity in religious matters, the more egotistical its religion became. A church which is only a church, and not also a congregation, isolates even its most pious members, and so makes them selfish.

It is, however, impossible to speak of the Church in the days of Imperial power without mentioning its momentous influence upon Roman legislation previous to the downfall of the Roman Empire. This was a great opportunity for social work, and the Church made

use of it. It was not only in cases of flagrant wrong that noble and courageous bishops faced cruel and unjust emperors and officers of state, and protected the innocent, the weak, and the helpless; but from the days of Constantine onwards they also exercised a most salutary effect upon actual legislation. In the Roman code of Justinian I could enumerate a long list of laws the origin of which was influenced by the action of the Church. Among these were enactments dealing with the defence of the weak, the moral elevation of whole neglected classes, the sanctity of marriage, the protection of children, the care of prisoners, public morality, Sunday rest, and even questions of property.

In spite, however, of this influence, the alliance between the Church and the world was regarded by the very devout as an evil; and, in consequence, people who had practised asceticism in an isolated way formed themselves into communities. From the end of the third century dates the growth and spread of monasticism, the devotees of "apostolic life" aiming at the way of perfection and the sure salvation of their own souls, but still without departing from the principle of Christian liberty. Thus, while the Church of the world recognised

the monastic orders, they in turn acknowledged this worldly Church to be a Christian institution of second rank. This development ensured what had long been imminent—the abandonment of the attempt to introduce effectively into the national life of all countries the highest Christian ideal of life, as it was then understood. Such monasticism, born of "pious indifference," was not originally founded with a view to works of charity, and had for long little to do with charity; but it soon became an economic power, and that in quite a different direction from what might have been expected.

The Church reached the Germanic peoples, and, in place of the Romans, there appeared the Romance nations. These races were the first that might fairly be described as children of the Catholic Church, and it was consequently among them, and in the Middle Ages, that the Church, no longer having a rival in the ancient order of society, was able to make really authoritative its theory and practice. Ideas suggested wholly by the contemplation of another world ruled both spiritual and intellectual life; fear of that other world, and of purgatorial fire, together with hope of future bliss, held universal sway. "Pious indifference" to earthly concerns and anxiety for individual salvation effectually

checked all thoughts of this world's natural claims. The idea was predominant that earthly things are never more than means, form, empty show—if nothing worse. All who thought and reflected at all lived in the other world—and how intimate their acquaintance with it!—while the rest lived in naïve worldliness, though they suffered from a bad conscience.

In the social system corporate life alone prevailed; the individual was no more than a member of a class to which he belonged. It may easily be imagined that in such a state of society the nomadic life was a hard one. Those in possession of power enforced it sternly; but their subordinates were not only governed, but, as a rule, taken care of, and regarded their service simply as a law of nature. It was only the inequality of wealth and its arbitrary administration that introduced into the iron order of social caste some trace of freedom and variety. For that very reason this intractable element, and particularly commerce, became an object of suspicion.

The Church did not interfere with the slow process of economic development, whereby money as a medium of exchange was substituted for primitive payment in kind; on the contrary, as a landowner on a large scale, its

own position was radically affected by this change—a fact no less true of the monastic orders. Even the great reforms of western monasticism may, as Uhlhorn has recently pointed out, be regarded as illustrating the economic development of the age. Thus the system of the Cluniac order was an indication of general economic reorganisation in France after the break-up of the Frankish kingdom of the Carlovingians. By that time only great monastic foundations—centres, as they were, of important agricultural communities scattered all over the country—were in a position to provide for the people a new mode of existence; while, on the other hand, the forms taken by the mendicant orders corresponded to the development of town life and the general use of money. The great monastic corporations formed in many parts a kind of agricultural circle, within which there was patriarchal care for the inhabitants; and, till the thirteenth century, clergy and monks alike everywhere belonged to the ruling classes. The services they rendered to civilisation, and their philanthropic work, were not, as a rule, determined by brotherly love, but rather by a desire to maintain their economic position as lords and patrons.

But although the Church was now fully developed as a hierarchical institution, supreme above all, it continued to prescribe to others an attitude towards property the very opposite of that adopted by itself, and it still hid this inconsistency under the fiction that it was the embodiment of charity. And as long as it did, in the persons of its great Popes, defend justice and right, and really was a civilising and educative, helpful and protective power, men bore with this contradiction between theory and practice.

The theologians of the Church proclaimed community of possessions to be the natural and ideal order, and generally proceeded from this to the further ideal of freedom from possessions and desires; extolled a contemplative life spent in voluntary poverty, and saw in work especially a punishment for sin. But when it came to practice, how could this Church fight vigorously against involuntary poverty as an evil, when it declared voluntary poverty to be a blessing, and deemed even involuntary indigence necessary, that there might be scope for the virtue of almsgiving? How could it promote activity and work, when its highest ideal was still passive contemplation? Almsgiving was all it could really

encourage; for it was only the existence of misery in the world that made it possible for busy people and men of property to be saved. There was, indeed, a certain attempt at progress in the endeavour to specify the exact extent to which those who are possessed of means are really bound to give as a duty. It was recognised that there is such a duty, and that was of the highest importance. But the precise directions which were drawn up were only rules upon paper, which led to pharisaic casuistry, and deadened moral feelings. They encouraged the illusion that a man does enough if he gives a little of his superfluous wealth to such of his neighbours as are in the last extremity of want. This was, of course, not the intention of those schoolmen who set themselves to trace in bold outlines a Christian-Social state, but many understood it so. How instructive it is that the only attempt known in the history of the Church to define the extent to which it is a positive duty to exercise charity and share one's wealth with others, only succeeded in restricting and paralysing love!

In process of time the result of all this was that rigid and selfish ideas of personal property were gradually relaxed, giving place to lavish almsgiving and a purposeless profusion of

liberality. The Middle Ages are sufficient proof that alms cannot cure pauperism. At the same time it was during these very Middle Ages that charity often proved itself capable of breaking the spell of "pious indifference" and "deeds of merit." There were continually appearing great, saintly, self-sacrificing men, who preached not only repentance, but also mercy. There was a constant succession of these from the eleventh century till Savonarola in the fifteenth. They did what is rarely done now even by those who are most self-sacrificing: they themselves lived as the poor did. And yet these pious and compassionate souls were purposely helping to keep open the very wounds they sought to heal, and it soon came about again that personal ministration, the duty of neighbour to help neighbour, was passed on from one to another, until it was left to the very poorest class, who had not strength to take it up.

The reaction began in the fourteenth century. The Church, whose wealth consisted wholly in kind, failed to keep pace with the change by which money became the medium of exchange; and the monasteries, as wealthy landed estates, became impoverished. The Roman Curia was then gradually transformed into a

financial department conducted without reference to charity. This it was that gave the impulse to traffic in indulgences. At last the laity of different countries discovered the contradiction between the preaching and the practice of the Church, with the result that, as a financial institution, the Church fell into discredit.

At the same time opinions with regard to work, property and poverty began slowly to change, not from any principle, but owing to the force of altered circumstances. Men began to feel a vague, yet overmastering consciousness of an urgent social duty which could not be fulfilled in the cloister or the cell. So it came about that the mendicant friars were no longer monks properly so called, for they now have their place and their work in the world. This feeling led to further steps in the same direction, and there resulted a kind of semi-monachism and even a class of what might be called "fourth-part monks," forming independent religious communities, who bound themselves by some of the monastic rules, but meanwhile worked for others in all manner of ways, and held that feeding the poor was better than a passive life of contemplation.

At this time, too, owing to the gradual

emancipation of the different states and nations from the secularised theocracy of Rome, attention began to be drawn to the special and peculiar duties of States and towns as regards the earthly welfare of the citizens—so much so, that a branch of scholastic theology was actually devoted to these points. Furthermore, it was then that, in place of the class-divisions and castes of the Middle Ages, the idea arose of individual personality, its rights and its value. In the towns, both the happiness caused by vigorous work on the one hand, and the pressure of want on the other, helped men to recognise that earthly welfare is in itself good, that it has a significance of its own, and yet is closely connected with morality and with eternity. With such a conception, the object of charity once more became simple and straightforward, while at the same time new methods were demanded, so that in this direction, as well as in others, the way was being paved for the Reformation.

But all effort was still held in check by the fear of the other world and the idea of reward, which argument and persuasion were alike unable to overcome. Apart from some attempts at municipal relief of the poor, everything as regards social and charitable work

was, at the close of the fifteenth century, in exactly the same position outwardly as it had been during the thirteenth century. Mendicancy still ranked as a profession, as an art even, and as "work;" while aversion to labour was still a widespread evil, encouraged by the endless holidays of the Church. The moral consciousness of the time had not as yet come to regard want and misery in a new light. The large displacement of wealth during the period of transition to the new money currency, the tremendous fluctuation of prices, the ruin of whole classes and their subsequent concentration of effort upon the re-establishment of their own position—all this tended to provoke great economic crises; malcontents indulged in bitter cursing of ecclesiasticism, and saw in the prevailing conditions of Church and State the kingdom of Satan and of Antichrist. But all they could set up in its place was at best the old communistic ideal, of which the Church, in its monachism, had long ago made unsuccessful trial. More often it was a strange and naïve medley, in which the Franciscan freedom from earthly needs was mingled with very terrestrial covetousness, seeking to satisfy itself by force, on the ground that the existing order was near its end. It was only towards the

close of the period that there began to emerge certain demands capable of realisation and full of promise for the future.

At this juncture came the Reformation. Its political and social teaching took its tone entirely from the conditions which had been growing up during the two preceding centuries, and from these it would almost be possible to infer the views of the Reformers with regard to social and economic questions. But the novel feature was that they now claimed the authority of the Gospel, and thus for the first time rested upon a religious basis. What were these ideas, and in what practical results did they issue?

The underlying theories found expression in Luther's "Sermon on Good Works," his "Letter to the Nobility of Christendom," his "Treatise on Christian Liberty," and others of his writings. Serious as he was, he too did full justice to that fundamental idea which, in the primitive Church and in the Middle Ages, had shown itself as "Pious Indifference;" only he understood it in its purest, simplest, and most vigorous sense, that is, as unshakable confidence and trust in God; and for that very reason it no longer appeared merely as a quietistic element, leading to renunciation of the

world, but also as an active motive, able to overcome the world: the faith of a Christian makes him free, and gives him the mastery over all things. That is one point, and the other is a return to brotherly love, in place of the selfish refinement to which almsgiving had been reduced. By simplifying the idea of brotherly love, new depth was given to it, and it came to mean: "A life freely given to others, in glad and willing service." The Reformation sapped the very foundations of the pretended "merit" of good works, by insisting that only by grace and through faith can we have any dealings with God. Consequently alms and good works ceased to be regarded as worth anything in themselves, but were accorded their due value in a life of steady work at a useful calling, the main point being that a man should not live to himself, but unto God and for his fellow men, since through love a Christian shall be servant of all. Moreover Luther appreciated the fact that love of God and of one's neighbour are inseparably connected. Only he differed from those who had gone before him in recognising more fully their inner unity, for to him all secular work, performed in faith, and of public utility, was worship. Charitable and social work of every

kind thus became one special side of a general course of action, prompted by a constant frame of mind, and finding scope in the ordinary business of life. Luther's indignation against useless and excessive almsgiving was extended to that so-called "Love" which was content to wait until the sufferer was at the last extremity, and then to do such a minimum as would satisfy the bare demands of duty. He also recognised that earthly blessings are blessings, although of a minor order; and work, when done in the right spirit, was valued more highly by him than by the theologians of the Middle Ages, inasmuch as it was no longer regarded as mere "negotium," the negation of "otium," but rather as a joyful exercise.

Such convictions necessarily gave rise to new principles for the guidance of social work. Of these I shall mention only the most important: first, real and effective assistance must be rendered, genuine help being the ultimate, and indeed the only, object; secondly, it is to be given not to the lazy, but to the helpless; thirdly, the aid given must be duly proportioned, and not excessive; fourthly, there must be method in relief; fifthly and lastly, such social ministration is especially incumbent upon municipalities: authorities generally, and, in

short, the whole civil power, for to its care God has committed the temporal welfare of the people, though, first of all, it must recognise its own Christian standing, and act accordingly.

During the Reformation period a certain beginning really was made towards carrying out all these ideals. Here and there existing means of relief were combined and centralised, guardians of the poor were appointed, a general relief fund was started, and poor rates were levied. But unfortunately the final results may be summed up in a word: in the end nothing of importance was achieved. Indeed, it must further be admitted that the Roman Catholics are justified in asserting that theirs, not ours, was the revival of charitable work in the sixteenth century, and that, as far as Lutheranism was concerned, the practical social problem was soon in worse plight than before. How is this disappointing fact to be accounted for? How was it that the movement which had led to the formulation of new and better principles, did, as a matter of fact, produce hardly any improvement?

There is, even now, a great deal to be learned from the answers to these depressing questions.

In the first place, it must be remembered

that in spite of the high esteem in which Luther had always held civic authority and the State, his original intention was to reconstruct the Church on the simple basis of government by the congregation. He had visions of a congregational life founded upon fellowship, and on principles of Christian liberty, fraternity and equality. It was further his idea that the national element should find free expression—only the nation then meant the Roman Empire of German nationality—and he had in view an improvement in the general economic condition of the country, an increase in its culture, and the upraising of down-trodden classes. Not that those were in his eyes separate and independent ideals; rather he was convinced that a return to the Gospel would inevitably bring about their realisation. Therefore there was no immediate need to press them; he could afford to wait, if necessary; only the Gospel must have free course.

But he could not expect that this conception would be generally understood. His message was hailed by classes numerically powerful, though still groaning under the oppression and want which they were no longer sufficiently servile to tolerate. These were the peasantry of Southern and Central Germany, and the

poorer class of artisans. It was just at that time too that their demands had become articulate, and their strength and their deserts both seemed to entitle them to claim from the privileged classes a recognised status of their own. The time seemed, moreover, to be nearly ripe for the realisation of that ideal state in which all ranks should be knit together in one great bond of brotherhood; the privileges of the clergy, of the nobility, and of the guilds be curtailed; and the nation be established on a new social basis. No wonder, then, that the down-trodden and oppressed hailed with gladness the works of Luther, and understood them to confer upon the deliverance that had been planned the sanction of the Gospel. "It is the will of God;" this was the interpretation put upon his writings.

You know how it ended. All were to blame, but most of all those princes, rulers and cities by whose authority the movement, having become revolutionary, was quenched in streams of blood. Nor was Luther himself innocent. One may draw a fine distinction and say: "He committed no fault, yet he was not innocent;" or it may be asked in return how he ought to have acted; but, in spite of all excuses, one fact is obvious, that ever since the days of the

Peasant-War both the German State and the German Evangelical Church have had a debt to pay and an obligation to fulfil. Unless appearances are utterly deceptive, in those days a great opportunity was wasted.

Nothing came of the programme, which had aimed at making the congregation the broad basis on which to build up the Church, and at knitting together in brotherly unity all classes, sharing equal privileges; and the new Church that had suddenly come into being was destined to be organised and managed by the secular authority, the princes of the land, and by theologians.

But even though the original ideals were abandoned, how did it happen that so deplorably little was accomplished in the way of social work—in some directions less even than before? Why did not the newly-formulated principles I have mentioned bring forth at least a scanty harvest? The fact is that a variety of reasons contributed to this result. In the first place, theologians had dwelt too exclusively on pure doctrine, and their tenet, that no amount of good works can in themselves be anything but defective, was not calculated to inspire men with energy and self-sacrificing zeal. They were right in excluding the theory

of merit, only they required first of all to educate their hearers up to a higher conception. The lazy and selfish were glad to be told that God cares nothing for good works. In the second place, the collapse of the congregational idea soon caused the sense of fellowship to fail also; and without that, nothing on a large scale can ever be accomplished. It became a familiar notion that those in authority ought to do everything, although they were in fact doing less and less. Moreover, the general distress again increased after the Peasant war. The number of idlers, voluntary and involuntary, was immense; and no joy in work could be awakened in a people that was not free. Yet another reason lay in the financial position of the Lutheran country churches, which before long became exceedingly embarrassed. Without means of their own, and soon reduced to mere dependencies of the State, they were often obliged to be content with a wretched endowment for clergy and schools. The "general fund," where there was one, dwindled away, while the immediate care of the poor, undertaken without experience and with untrained forces, was as before transferred from one to another until it became nobody's duty. Furthermore, the new pre-

rogatives of German princes and the introduction of Roman law enabled the Roman idea of private ownership to force its way in again, and to oust existing and better views on property. Finally, spiritual poverty and paralysis were everywhere characteristic of the later representatives of Lutheranism. Everywhere their horizon was of the narrowest; how then could anything of importance be accomplished in any direction? That was the state of affairs when the Thirty Years' War broke out, and almost cost our nation its life.

But things looked very much better in the Reformed than in the Lutheran Church. For in the Reformed Church congregational control really did exist; its members were more actively energetic, because they did not confine themselves exclusively to preaching the pure word of God, and because they were generally not in a position to rely upon the secular authority. They borrowed New Testament institutions and points of view for the conduct of their ecclesiastical and social affairs; they revived the original diaconate of the early Church; they sought, in contrast to Roman Catholicism, to train up a new and really Christian society, and they succeeded in doing so.

Lutheran Protestantism produced nothing

to be compared with the spectacle of refugee communities of the Reformed Church, Presbyterians in Scotland, and Huguenots in France. These revealed the growth of an evangelical people, who did not stop short at mere care of the poor and charitable effort—a people in whose midst religion knit all classes together with brotherly bonds of unity, and who really did create a new social order of fellowship without communism. The Puritans, indeed, who founded the States of New England, were for whole generations a standing proof that a community in which religion and morality are as powerful as law, is possible upon earth.

Here in Germany the immediate consequences of the Thirty Years' War showed themselves in the lamentable growth of the divisions that separated class from class, and in the establishment of an absolute government, supported by the nobility. It may be that in no other way could even the small amount of culture that was left have been preserved. It was then, however, that the Lutheran Church showed that it was not yet powerless, but possessed, as it were, hidden treasures, only waiting to be brought to light. This brings us to the first beginnings of the present epoch,

for we are still in the process of development that commenced with the appearance of Pietism on the one hand, and of the Enlightenment on the other.

Pietism it was that revived the dormant consciousness of Protestantism, together with the sense of philanthropic obligation. By treating religion as an all-important and personal matter, and encouraging warmth of feeling, it at once brought into prominence the neglected duty towards one's neighbour. To the founders of Pietism we owe the great impulse then given to active charity and care of the poor, on the part of municipalities as well as of private individuals and societies. To their example is mainly due all the work of Christian charity performed by Christian associations from that time to this. But the Pietistic movement was always confined within somewhat narrow limits, and selected its methods in deference to a one-sided principle. It was determined to accomplish everything by means of institutions, and it made no use of congregational organisation, of which, indeed, only a wretched travesty survived. The need of trained forces everywhere, rather than of a few amateur dispensers of charity, was not understood, nor yet the fact that the whole

nation had to be educated and elevated; the magnitude of this task was for the most part beyond the intellectual horizon of the Pietists; and at that time, indeed, where was the German nation? Another power was required to give impetus to such a work as that.

In the whole of history there is, perhaps, nothing more remarkable than the rise of the Enlightenment movement towards the end of the seventeenth century, and the story of the changes it underwent before it became the Socialism of to-day—a gradual evolution which furnishes more than one example of the phenomenon known as direct and retrograde motion.

The starting-point of the movement was the idea of absolute government—primarily in the sense of the absolute power of the sovereign —together with that of the supreme right and duty of the State to care for the welfare of the citizens. Under pressure of this idea, all that remained of the rights of the Diet, and of historic forms and institutions generally, was swept away, excepting only such formalities as were connected with the Court. But from their very ruins there arose, like the phœnix from the ashes, the idea of humanity. The ideal which ancient philosophers had long ago declared to be the natural

system, and which in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries had seemed to be on the point of realisation—only to be lost again in the din of theological conflict—now reappeared and attached itself to the new conception of the rights of man, as proclaimed and expounded by the inspired prophet of this doctrine, Rousseau. Whatever the history of its growth, the idea was there, gained ground, and succeeded in raising out of the darkness of world-weariness and pessimism into the radiance of the gladdest and most confident optimism all the ideals that had hitherto passed muster in religion, transferring them from the history of the past into a glorious future, to which it looked for their realisation. Only one step, it promised, and the victory would be won! If individuals and nations would but consider their own interests, if they would but will it, they could at a single stroke make happiness their own; freedom of development would be possible to each one, the highest sense of well-being would be attained, and every one might then with joy and gladness reach out his hand to his brethren, sharers in a free self-realisation. Liberty, Humanity, Happiness—these were the watchwords, and this was the Gospel preached. Meanwhile our country was wretchedly poor,

its lower classes being uneducated, in bondage, destitute of rights, always on the verge of starvation! The nobility first took up the new idea, and toyed with it; but its mighty power was soon reflected in literature. Then it caught hold among the middle classes, forced its way in the most developed country, France, and penetrated by degrees to every nation in Europe.

Whatever be thought of this movement, there are two points on which all will agree. In the first place, the eighteenth century clearly bestowed upon us certain blessings that can never again be taken away, namely, the recognition of the rights and personal value of each individual, and a sense of the dignity of humanity as a whole. These blessings are, indeed, contained in the Gospel. They had been brought to light again by the Reformation; but it had failed to turn them into living realities. Secondly, it will be admitted that it was a frail foundation on which the Enlightenment sought to establish these blessings; further, that they were never obtained, but always involve a problem ever new, and that their realisation demands sacrifices—very substantial and personal sacrifices—of which the Enlightenment did not even dream. Its promoters

failed to see that the stumbling-block in the way of the "happy man" is no less formidable an obstacle than man himself—that is, the natural, selfish man.

We do not deny to the Enlightenment credit for the blessings to which I have referred. On the contrary, we acknowledge with gratitude that to it is due the recognition of these truths, together with the origin of many convictions, laws and institutions, both social and political, the existence of which seems to us a matter of course. This movement it was which first indicated a real departure from the standpoint of the Middle Ages, and through it the whole aspect of society was changed from top to bottom. We confess with shame that there is some truth in the poet's parodox, that Rousseau turned Christians into men. But in spite of all we owe it, we do criticise the spirit in which the Enlightenment has worked, and still works. We join issue with its idea of natural Rights, and see in it a dangerous illusion; for helpless man does not come into the world with any Rights, but his very existence is dependent upon the love he finds there. To the one-sided interest in temporal welfare, encouraged by this movement, we oppose higher interests—the well-

being of the soul, the living God, the blessings of eternity. Lastly, we protest against that blindness which cannot see that all the ideals of the Enlightenment must end in empty schemes, or even become the terrible means of a general disintegration of society, if the selfishness in man be not overcome by the action of mighty forces of good, bringing gladness in their train. To this the ready answer is returned: "Yes, of course—altruism; but once the general conditions of life are ameliorated, that will come of itself as a result either of self-interest rightly understood or of a sort of inborn good nature, or of the social instinct." Of all falsehoods and delusions, this is about the worst and most mischievous. We shall have long to wait before an economic scheme is framed in which selfishness can play no part, or which can make the love of humanity a natural outflow of the human heart. The French Revolution and all subsequent experiences show that this Enlightenment movement by its own strength alone can produce nothing permanent; and that unlimited freedom is not constructive, but destructive. It was not until a return was made to the old historic lines, and to religion, law, and custom, that form and durability could be given to the true and

valuable elements in the ideas of the Enlightenment.

It must be admitted that during the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century this process was anything but an edifying spectacle, for amidst the endless obstacles due to a fierce reaction all progress was bitterly and wearily contested. The Church was generally on the wrong side, a fact which still rankles in the memory of the nation, and is not without influence on the economic struggles of the present day. The relations between the different classes, and the state of the country generally, might perhaps be happier to-day were it not for this dark shadow over the immediate past. Not even the greatly increased interest of the Church in philanthropic work during this last century, and the grand extension in the scope of its efforts, can suffice to blot out that reproach. Just as in the days before the Peasant war, so in those succeeding the wars of Independence, a great opportunity in our nation's life was allowed to slip by unused, with precisely the same effect as before, namely, that of estranging thousands from the Church. Meanwhile, a complete change of policy had taken place in one section of the Enlightenment movement.

The simple truth had at length been recognised, that so long as men are endowed or equipped with different powers, absolute liberty must necessarily lead to the most complete suppression of the weakest. Natural science had at the same time come to be regarded as the only true form of knowledge possible to man, and, under its influence, anything in Rousseau's ideals that did not bear upon material existence was entirely brushed aside. "The struggle for existence" became an all-powerful magic phrase. This development led to a reaction in which the original idea of the absolute supremacy of the State again came to the fore: out of Individualism arose a demand for Socialism, as being the only possible means of satisfying the pretensions of the individual—a result not to be achieved by means of unrestricted liberty, or, in other words, by Anarchy. Our Social Democracy of to-day is—at least in part—merely a modified and disguised form of the eighteenth century Individualism, and knows no higher ideal than the temporal well-being of the individual, and no forces superior to the instinct of self-preservation and the universal right of suffrage. The word "Social" is introduced partly to conceal, partly to facilitate,

the unlimited pursuit of a merely individual and earthly happiness. But we are all acquainted with this last development, which has made rapid way with the march of machinery and increased facilities of world-wide intercourse.

The question now before us concerns our position and our duty at the present time.

CHAPTER IV

THE SOCIAL MISSION OF THE CHURCH OF TO-DAY

It may be said that the Social mission of the Church to-day is both new in kind and of greater urgency than in the past: not because poverty and distress have increased—for that is, to say the least, not capable of proof; nor because the Church is more negligent than before in works of charity—quite the reverse is true; nor yet because self-sacrificing and trained workers are less numerous than hitherto—on the contrary, they have never been so numerous as now. In what sense, then, can the Church's task to-day be called new and more urgent than in the past? Well, to begin with, history proves that new and urgent duties never come to light during the dark days of declining movements. In the dreariness and distress that then prevail, all available energy must be exerted to hold fast at least the things that remain. It is only in a progressive age

that the obligation to new and higher action can be felt; and so at the present time it is just the progress we have already made that thrusts new tasks upon us. In indicating briefly the various lines along which we have advanced, I hope to say nothing with which you will not all agree.

First, we have no longer to do with classes in a state of tutelage, but, though in some respects they may still be powerless, all have equal recognition, and a certain measure of education now belongs to all. I need not enter in further detail into this matter, in which the immense progress of the last century is clearly shown. It is only in small sequestered districts, or under special circumstances, that it is still possible for the relief of the poor to take the form of patriarchal care or patronage by the upper classes of those beneath them. Now that all classes have dealings with each other on the footing of legal equality, a similar freedom of intercourse on equal terms, whether friendly or the reverse, has become more and more general in all the relations of life—a condition towards which the spread of education and equality of political rights have been largely conducive. This only serves to heighten the contrast between wealth

and the lack of it, as represented by Capital and Labour, opposed to each other as though they were impersonal forces; and to render more intolerable a state of affairs in which whole classes of the population, after enjoying a good education and acquiring thereby a genuine taste for the blessings of culture, must yet spend their lives in such straitened circumstances that they are able to appropriate but few of those blessings, and are, moreover, liable to be ruined by the slightest economic disturbance.

Secondly, conscience is more alive, and there is a keener sense of duty than before with regard to the welfare of all the members of society; that is an unmistakable advance, of such cogency as to compel people to take part in it outwardly, even if they do not really do so in their hearts. Moreover, we have learned to regard poverty and distress as a serious social danger, in a sense very different from that formerly thought of, while at the same time we have become aware that no thorough reform can be effected except by preventive means. The obligation arising from the recognition of these facts is an entirely new one, such as no past generation ever felt. In coping with it, the study of sociology and

economics is found to resemble that of therapeutics, where attention is more and more being concentrated upon hygiene, the science of preventive measures.

Thirdly, everything to-day is dominated by the mighty power of an economic system embracing the whole world; nothing can escape it; its influence is felt on the remotest village handicraft; it alters or does away with existing conditions, and threatens with insecurity the economic existence of whole industries. No wonder that it also affects the organisation of the Church; to mention one point alone, congregational life is endangered by those facilities for migration which follow naturally upon the improved means of communication throughout the world. Both in the great cities, and outside their bounds, there is a vast nomadic population—a class of people in whom, as every page of history shows, it is very difficult to maintain a high standard of morality and religion.

In the fourth place, we are face to face, no longer with merely naïve ideas of Communism, but with Socialistic systems of considerable economic development, founded on a materialistic view of life. These systems and these views are gaining ground among the nations, and already crowds of people are

definitely and deliberately giving up, not only membership in the Church, but also the Christian Faith, and Christian ethics, so that Materialism, theoretical and practical, is becoming a power in public life. But even this development can by no means be regarded simply from the point of view which condemns it as "desertion" or "backsliding." Before talking of desertion, we must prove that there was, to begin with, real membership in a corporate body. But large numbers, who are now termed "deserters," never did lay claim to living membership, and it is only from having been so long disguised that this fact now appears the more striking and appalling. Such make-believe is, to be sure, under certain circumstances a restraining and humanising influence, and one may therefore regret the disillusionment. All the same, it is a step in advance when one theory of existence is straightforwardly confronted with another. Besides, there are even worse things than deliberate materialism, namely, absolute indifference or calculating selfishness, endeavouring to get what advantage it can for itself from all theories of existence at once, and hating every conviction that threatens to destroy its own comfort and impose duties upon it.

These are the principal factors which go to make up the existing situation, and they must be kept in view while seeking for an answer to the question: What is the special social mission of the Church to-day? There are two mistaken notions which I surely no longer require to correct, namely, that it is the duty of the Church to disentangle these difficulties, and that it is in possession of a sovereign remedy for all ills. The Roman Catholic Church does indeed sometimes seem to imply that it holds such a secret panacea, and is only waiting for the nations to swallow it; but it does not seriously mean it. As a Christian Church, it, too, cannot eventually disregard the fact that the peace promised by the Gospel is a peace which the world cannot give, and that the improvement of economic conditions is not the duty of religion. Therefore, when we are speaking of the Social mission of the Church—of our Evangelical Church—our object must simply be to settle what form, under present circumstances, this task must assume, a task always one and the same in its fundamental nature, but differing much from time to time in its characteristic forms. So, too, the means at its disposal never really change, but the use to be made of them varies with the period.

Above all it must be remembered that the chief task of the Church is still the preaching of the Gospel, that is to say, the message of Redemption and of eternal life. Christianity as a religion would be at an end if this truth were obscured, and the Gospel were to be changed into a social manifesto, whether for the sake of gaining popularity, or owing to excessive zeal for reform. More than that; none dare ultimately expect more for himself from the message of the Church than a firm, consolatory faith, able to triumph over all the troubles of life. "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" This conviction and the glad tidings of Jesus Christ the Redeemer constitute the essence of the Gospel, from which is developed that view of life—that is to say, that way of thinking of the soul and the body, life and death, happiness and unhappiness, riches and poverty—which is the truth, and therefore makes men free. But the power that lies in every definite theory of existence is proved at the present day by the Socialistic movement. At one of our last Congresses it was eloquently demonstrated that it is just to such a clear theory of life that the Social-Democratic movement owes its strength. Its thousands of

adherents do not want merely bread; they know full well they do not live by bread alone; they want an answer to all the questions of the universe and of life, and for that—for their faith—they are ready to make sacrifices. For that very reason, the work of the Church is easier at the present time than at any period in the past, since never before were so many men filled with such longing as to-day for firm and consistent convictions. In spite of social divisions and apparent disintegration, there is an all-penetrating force which binds men together with close ties of spiritual fellowship, namely, Thought and Speech. And the strongest expression of Thought will prevail. Men are ready to-day to give anything for a conviction that is real conviction—for a belief that really is believed in. Men are not so base that they can find satisfaction in the gratification and the service of their individual existence; they require convictions as to the meaning of life. But the demand is for a faith in which there is real faith; and to provide this, constitutes the mission of the Church—its task both new and old. It has to proclaim to the present generation the living God and life eternal. It has to testify of the redeeming Lord, whose person still wins reverence and love even from

those who are most alienated. Zealously and earnestly it must teach that sin is the ruin of mankind and the strongest root of all misery; and must preach that truth both fully and freely, in an intelligible form, so expressed that all may understand. When that is done, the main part of its Social Mission will already be fulfilled. But in order to be able to do so, it must ally itself with all real knowledge and with truth of every kind, or else it will bring discredit on the message it proclaims. It is true that one ray of Gospel light is often sufficient to illumine the heart, and make a man free; and the lowliest servant of Jesus Christ may prove a true saviour to his neighbour; but in the great battle of intellects, where one theory of the universe is opposed to another, the victory can only remain with that interpretation which is a complete whole, and can prove itself true and strong in every way.

I said that none dare ultimately expect more for himself from the message of the Church than a firm, consolatory faith, able to triumph over the troubles of life. The emphasis here is on the words "for himself;" it is a very different matter with regard to other people. Our historical retrospect has shown us that it is an essential part of Christianity to weld the

individual members of a congregation into a brotherhood full of active life, and then to knit such congregations together into a great association of willing helpers, and that when in course of time congregational life collapsed, this meant a serious loss to the Church. In the early days of Christianity active philanthropy was one of the most persuasive methods of propaganda, and Jesus Christ Himself preached the Gospel while He went about doing good. If sin is at the root of misery, misery and error in turn produce fresh sin and shame. Therefore war must be waged upon misery; but to win the day two things are essential—personal influence from man to man, and the growth of genuine congregational life. Of the first of these there is no need to speak at length. We all know that in the end it is only personal love that really counts. Institutions and charitable organisations touch but the fringe of the matter; only that which proceeds from the heart and addresses itself to the heart is of real moment as weighed in the balance of eternity. In helping one's neighbour, one must set oneself neither above nor beneath him but beside him. Brothers, not patrons, we are called to be; and in answering this call, Christian charity finds its scope and proper work—a

work the more necessary the more the relations between the classes assume an impersonal form owing to the development in our midst of our modern economic order.

With regard to the second point, it is certain that where there are no close congregational ties, all effort remains isolated. We should therefore be grateful to those who are now once more calling attention to the fact that ever since the Reformation our Church has been called upon to build up real congregations, and so to revive a vigorous corporate life. The following objection is often heard: "It is too late for that now; organisation of that sort is no longer possible; neither is it compatible with the bureaucratic constitution of our Church, nor yet can living congregations be formed from the kind of Christianity professed by the masses and the State." To be sure such a task is hard enough, but we need not yet despair of its fulfilment. If we really had to abandon it, I do not know where we could turn for help, for the service of the congregation is one that no public institutions can perform, and for which neither their social work nor their coercive measures are any adequate substitute. We have much to be thankful for in the survival of the congregation,

even in a defective form; and it would be a fatal error to despise what remains to us, and search for other ideals of organisation. As every one knows and feels, these Congregations are in their original intention communities in which all distinctions of high and low, rich and poor, are swept away, and class differences count for nothing; in fact, just such institutions as we have special need of at the present time. Therefore we must do all in our power to build them up, and give them life, and then patiently wait to see whether their existence will not lead to the gradual transformation or abandonment of State-government in our ecclesiastical polity. Next to the preaching of the Gospel, the reconstruction of congregational life is the chief evangelical-social task now before the Church. The pusillanimous, who regard with despair the fulfilment of this task, on the ground that existing conditions would never allow of such an organisation, would do well to consider the example set by the Social-Democratic movement. It has succeeded in creating and maintaining, among a migratory population, and in face of obstacles of every kind, an organisation closely knit, operative alike in the cities and the provinces, both national and inter-

national. Why could we not do the like? Because, it will be said, that movement is essentially concerned with one class, and with a common interest serving as a link between its members. But have not we, too, a common interest, and have not we a message which unites the different classes in a spiritual union? If our congregations neither are nor become what they ought to be, it is not the fault of circumstances, but of lack of faith and love.

It is, indeed, certain that we can no longer draw people into congregations whose sole end is Divine Service, and that such congregations are necessarily without real efficacy. But the early Church furnishes a pattern of what true congregational life should be, and the lines along which charitable work in the Church has developed during the last century point in the same direction. It is no empty dream that, in the history of Christianity, there have been congregations—capable of supervision, well ordered, bound together by close ties—in which, next to divine service, active charity was the central point—in which, rather, service to God and active charity were merged in one. And dare we say that for us that is unattainable? Nay, rather we must keep it clearly before us, as the goal towards which we constantly aspire. For

this reason all great works of Christian charity must not only be fostered and extended, but also made more and more congregational in their organisation. Where one congregation is too small to do by itself all that is required, several must join together so as to form eventually a strong local association. The church-building must also be an assembly-hall for the community, or, better still, there must be an assembly-hall in addition to the church, and people should meet together, not only to hear sermons, but also to take counsel about benevolent work of every sort. A true Christian sense of honour must be aroused, allowing none to call himself a Christian unless he is ready to come forward in person to minister to the distressed and help the needy; and, besides this, there should be professional trained deacons and deaconesses at work in every parish. Not one of the destitute should any longer be able to say that nobody cares for him. The present age is one that delights in Utopias—dangerous toys with which it is only too ready to play. This idea is not Utopian, but can be realised. Upon its realisation, and the consequent triumph over indolence, avarice, and selfish love of ease, depends, not indeed the actual existence of our Church—for it has

many supports, and might possibly hold out for a very long time—but at all events the existence of a really evangelical Christianity, and the claim of our Church to appeal to the hearts of the people.

At the same time, our opponents are right in saying that the formation of such congregations is a task demanding time, and that the present conditions of public life necessitate action of another and more immediate kind. Can and should the Church—I am referring to the organised Church—do anything more than preach the Gospel, and revive congregational life? This is a most important question, and we have to answer it. Some—and the majority—reply most decidedly in the negative, and they explain their reason for doing so in very different ways. Others answer it in the affirmative, but generally not without qualification; or else they evade it by the reply that, whatever the Church may do or leave undone, individual Christians are bound to carry the Gospel into public life and bring it to bear upon current conditions.

We need not here discuss the duties of individuals, but there seems to me to be no question that since our Church still holds a great and influential place in the State, and

in the life of the nation, it is bound to make use of this position for the advancement of evangelical social ideals, and accordingly to seek the most opportune ways of making its voice heard. Otherwise it will always be suspected of being merely an accommodating tool in the hands of an "Aristocratic Government," and will incur the blame of allowing an ever-widening breach to divide Christian ideals from the social ordinances of public life. Even in the days when it was numerically weak, the early Church raised its voice against abuses in the State. We saw that the Church of the Empire, as it became after the reign of Constantine, was faithful to its obligations, and exerted its influence to bring about the suppression of moral evils. In the Middle Ages, too, the Popes opposed tyranny and violence, as well as open immorality, and they do not to this day forego their claim to pronounce judgment upon important ethical and social questions. It is, indeed, on this very point that the difference is so marked between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. To the former the "Church" means simply the hierarchical institution, with which, consequently, all responsibility rests, whereas, according to Protestantism, the spirit of Christianity is not confined

to any organised ecclesiastical body, but is to be found also in the mundane pursuits and ordinances of Christendom. Therefore Protestants believe that if the Government or other secular authority exercises its power rightly, it will be at one with the ethical ideals of Christianity, and accordingly, the ordering of temporal affairs may safely be left in its hands. But this in no way debars the Church from raising its voice in protest against moral and social evils, and from influencing both public opinion and the conduct of matters of national interest. It becomes, indeed, its duty so to do, if the State shows itself negligent or callous. Within the last thirty years our churches have become better able to express their opinions. But to what purpose have they this voice—in congregational representation, district, provincial and general synods, ecclesiastical courts and high consistories—if not to testify in the parish, in the city, in the province, in the whole country, on questions of moral and social welfare, and to declare: "This is right; that is wrong"? Are they to deal only with church rates, church formularies, and unimportant details? This may satisfy people for a time, but in the long run it will prove intolerable, and must soon excite feelings of pity or

worse towards the organisation of the Church as a whole; for its vast apparatus has a right to exist only if it renders real service to the whole body—not by words, but by evangelical-social work, work in which every order must perform its own share.

But the more stress is laid upon this, the more need there is to define the limits within which the Church must confine its activity—bounds that do not include economic questions. It has nothing to do with such practical questions of social-economics as the nationalisation of private property and enterprise, land-tenure reforms, restriction of the legal hours of work, price-regulations, taxation, and insurance; for in order to settle these matters, such technical knowledge is required as is altogether outside the province of the Church, and if it were to meddle with them at all it would be led into a secularisation of the worst description. But it is its duty to interfere in public conditions wherever it finds that serious moral evils are being tolerated. Can it be right for the Church, as it were, to shrug its shoulders and pass prostitution by in silence, as the priest did the man who had fallen among thieves? Is it enough to collect money for penitentiaries, leaving it to particular Christian associations

to fight against the evil? Is the Church not bound to set its face against duelling? Dare it, again, keep silence when it sees a state of things destructive of the sanctity of marriage, and of family life, and devoid of the most elementary conditions of morality? Dare it look calmly on while the weak are trodden under foot, and none lends a helping hand to people in distress? Dare it hear, without rebuking it, language which, in the name of Christianity, destroys the peace of the land and sows scorn and hatred broadcast? Is it really only a bureaucratic institution, or is it not its duty, as an established Church, to preserve peace, both civil and international, to draw together rich and poor, and to help to break down mischievous class-prejudices? There will, it is true, be found plenty to reply that the Church has enough to do if it preaches the word of God and administers the sacraments. But the same answer was made to the demand that it should undertake foreign and home missions. To that suggestion, too, the Church at first was deaf, asserting that such an undertaking formed no part of its office; but it has since come to see that by not attending to these matters it is neglecting its duties. There would at first sight seem to be more weight in the objection

that the representatives of the Church have no power to enforce their decisions on questions such as those I have mentioned; and that, owing to the peculiar composition of ecclesiastical gatherings, there is a risk of proposals being put forward without regard to their practicability, and therefore coming to nothing, as well as of meddling and interference in matters with which the Church has no concern. Such apprehensions are not unfounded, but the anticipation of mistakes in carrying it out is no adequate reason for opposing a course of action in itself necessary and good. Church assemblies will learn to measure their strength and to recognise their field of work only by practice in that work; and the well-defined and special relation in which the German Evangelical Churches stand to the State is sufficient guarantee against too ambitious schemes.

I have so far tried to indicate the social mission of the Church, but, besides this, there are many important tasks which Christians cannot regard with indifference, although their accomplishment lies outside the actual scope of the Church. Purely economic questions must admittedly be estimated and decided only from an economic standpoint; but there are many which affect vitally the moral condi-

tions of the people. Therefore the Church must not obstruct the discussion of such questions amongst its members—as, for instance, at these Evangelical-Social Congresses—for it is to the interest of the whole Church that warm-hearted, clear-sighted Christians should so study the subject as to be able to distinguish those efforts at reform which are full of promise for the future from such as are merely visionary, and to point out the nature and extent of their connection with moral questions. They should be ready to make sacrifices for social progress on sound lines. It cannot, indeed, be denied that the whole history of the Church shows that when warm-hearted Christians take up economic questions, they tend to favour radical projects. For their demands bearing on political economy they are wont to claim the support of the Gospel, and they endeavour to construct from it a socialistic programme. It must be admitted that we are even now threatened by this danger. Even Protestantism is not free from the danger that some day a second Arnold of Brescia may appear in its midst, Patarenes again arise, and clerical students of political economy attempt, in the name of the Gospel, to prescribe to others, as with legal force, the attitude which,

if they are to retain the name of Christians, they must assume towards social questions. There is certainly an element of danger in that coquetting with the Social-democratic movement which may already be noticed in certain quarters. As long as the leaders and journals of that party inculcate a life devoid of religion, of duties, of sacrifice and of resignation, what can we have in common with their conception of life as a whole? It is, again, a more than questionable procedure to prejudge and condemn "the rich" and whole classes of the nation, and dream that it will be possible by beginning at the bottom to construct by degrees an entirely new Christian commonwealth. As yet, indeed, these are only fragmentary and passing indications of what might happen in the future. There is as yet no one among us who does not believe that only such claims ought to be put before any individual in the name of the Gospel as are addressed to his conscience, his free choice and his love; and it is still clearly felt that the Gospel is concerned with supplying other than temporal needs; but things have their own logic, and those who have sown the wind will reap the whirlwind.

This warning is, however, not intended to

dissuade either evangelical Christians as such, or clergy and theologians generally, from occupying themselves with economic and social questions, and forming their own opinions upon them. On the contrary, Christianity ought to stand aloof from no common experience of life and the world, and it should be open to the consideration of all great questions. Thus for centuries its connection was of the closest with philosophy, and especially with metaphysics, in which all the intellectual life of the time was summed up. No one was then an educated Christian who was not also a philosopher. In like manner, history and social questions occupy a prominent place in the intellectual life of to-day, and those who wish to participate in this life cannot afford to neglect them.

But, above all, it is the want and misery of our fellow countrymen that act like a goad, urging us on to study and investigate the construction of the social organism, to examine which of its ills are inevitable, and which may be remedied by a spirit of self-sacrifice and energy. The magnitude and importance of this task make everything else that we have to do on and for this earth seem small. How can we as Christians leave this work undone,

and how, if, through our selfishness, indolence and sloth, our position becomes ever more difficult and critical, can we be surprised when we find ourselves overwhelmed with radical proposals from those who think differently from ourselves ?

A few words in conclusion. The signs of the times seem to point to further development of the socialistic principle of State administration of public and economic affairs. There are many who hail this tendency with unmixed delight, but I cannot number myself unreservedly among them. We have certainly reason to rejoice when sources of poverty and want are stopped, and misery is obviated. But we must not forget that every fresh regulation of this kind acts also as a check upon free development, and so compels us to devise new ways and means whereby conditions necessary for the training of free and independent personalities may be maintained. If it were all to end in legalised slavery; if, hemmed in from childhood by coercive measures, we were to lose all individual character, what a disaster that would be !

Three great tasks have been committed to our charge, as duties not only towards our-

selves, but towards future generations. These are the defence of the Evangelical Faith, the prevention, as far as in us lies, of distress among our fellow men, and the encouragement of education and culture. In the heat of economic conflict, and amidst rival schemes for allaying it, the last of these is apt to be forgotten; and yet moral and economic ruin would follow speedily upon the decline of culture. But the successful pursuit of education depends upon certain fixed conditions, which cannot be changed in an arbitrary manner, and by which, therefore, the nature and scope of all social and economic work must in part be determined.

Education can no more be brought within the bounds of one unbending system than Truth, from which it draws its breath, can be reduced to one dead level. But the Evangelical Church would be false to its own nature were it to renounce its alliance with truth and education, no longer making it its aim to train up free and independent Christians. This too is a great evangelical social work, and we have good reason to attend to it, since powers hostile to education stand in strong array against us.

Evangelical Faith, a heart sensitive to the wants of others, and a mind open to truth and

the treasures of the intellect—these are the powers on which our Church and nation rest. If we are but true to them, we shall realise more and more the truth of the promise expressed in your brave hymn of faith:

> "Now is there peace unceasing;
> All strife is at an end."

THE MORAL AND SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MODERN EDUCATION

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CHAPTER V

THE PURSUIT OF EDUCATION

The Evangelical Social Congress has imposed upon itself the task of critically investigating all those great movements of the present day which affect moral and social life, whether by acting as a stimulus or as a check, whether by constructiveness or reconstructiveness. Its purpose is to examine their nature, their worth, and to discover the spirit which ought to animate them. There is no doubt that the modern pursuit of education is one of the most prominent social features of our time. But at no period is it possible for one who wishes to study the general conditions of a nation to overlook its educational position; he must determine the standard this has reached, the strength of the interests bound up with education, and the measure of sacrifice made for it. Now in our day these questions are twice as important as they were; for the most cursory glance is enough to show how immensely the

pursuit of education has increased. The contrast is so great between the present and the past—even between now and thirty years ago —that the pursuit of a wider and deeper education may positively be said to be an essential characteristic of the present epoch. My task would be well-nigh endless were I to attempt to describe to you all the institutions which this pursuit of education has produced, and in which it manifests itself everywhere. I shall therefore only remind you of a few facts with which you are all familiar.

Let us take, for example, one of the larger German towns. We shall find there many much-frequented public libraries; we shall find, besides technical schools, voluntary and compulsory continuation-schools of every kind. Lectures in every department of knowledge are delivered to every class of audience, and are enlivened and illustrated by experiments and pictures of such excellence as to throw light on the most obscure points and bring the most distant objects near to people. Where there is a university or other adequate means of instruction, we hear of special courses being held in connection with it, in which particular subjects or the elements of the various sciences —their methods as well as their results—are

brought within the reach of those who have not had the advantage of an advanced education at school. By the universities again holiday- and continuation-courses are organised, and by their means those who left the university years ago become acquainted with the latest discoveries of science. Then there are courses of applied science; classes to promote first aid to the injured and care of the sick; instruction in the new code of civil law; series of lectures on social and political subjects and on the theory of education; discussions, or continuous courses of instruction, on fundamental questions of ethics or religion. Not only that, but posters call attention to cheap dramatic performances of the masterpieces of our poets, or to concerts for the people: Bach and Handel may be heard in church, or Beethoven and Wagner in public halls. Not only is there free admittance to museums, but provision is made for expert explanation of the collections and works of art contained in them. Even late in the evening, and right on into the night, there is no pause in the work of supplementing and extending the education of those who could not obtain thorough schooling in their youth; or of instructing aspiring artisans in the underlying principles, the inter-

connection, and the development of their particular trades. Not only elementary manuals and school-books, but also the best literary works of every civilised nation, are sold at the lowest possible prices; so that any one who knows how to go to work can for ten shillings procure a valuable library for which, only a generation ago, he would have had to pay ten times as much. In the country, too, a new scheme has recently been initiated, and professional agriculturists are being sent to give instruction in farming, fruit-growing, and other rural occupations. In every direction it is clear that that education which in former days only fell by chance to the lot of the few, or was the hard-won prize of the zealous and self-denying student, is now being systematised and made easily accessible to all. Finally, mention must be made of the great quantity of educational matter which finds its way into practically every house through the Press, either in the form of political newspapers or of special journals. Every industry, each handicraft, every branch of manufacture, has its own publication. These contain detailed information about all improvements in the special line of business with which they deal, and they are edited by men who, apart from their very

exact knowledge of that particular trade, are well acquainted with the economic dependence of their industry upon other industries, and with the statistics of the produce market and of commerce—in short, by men who possess knowledge of a very extensive and varied character. The *Waiters' Journal*, for example, recently came in my way, and showed me with what serious purpose and care such a paper is conducted, and how much advice and information its readers may gain from it.

But in order to complete our review of the contrast between the existing state of affairs and that of a generation ago, we must take particular note of certain classes which are now taking a special part in the upward movement, though at that time they were scarcely stirred by it. I refer to artisans and women. The pursuit of education by these two classes is the really distinguishing feature of the present epoch.

As far as the working classes are concerned, there are many of them who put to shame all other social grades. Quite recently it was once more authoritatively stated at Hamburg that the splendid courses of lectures which have been organised there are mainly attended by the so-called "lower classes."

Our interest and admiration cannot but be aroused by the zeal now shown by these "lower classes" or artisans, who are ready to make sacrifices, for the sake not only of improving their material condition, but also of raising themselves intellectually and taking a part in the progressive world of thought. This does not mean that they are free from the desire to satisfy as soon as possible some passing need; nevertheless it is undoubtedly knowledge itself for which they are striving. They have a burning longing, a hunger and thirst for real knowledge—for a scientific view of the world. Even if their ideas as to what knowledge can achieve are often extravagant and visionary, even if they under-estimate to an extraordinary degree the difficulties to be surmounted, there is something impressive in their firm belief in the efficacy of knowledge, and in its power to bring liberty, there is something touching in the light-heartedness with which they set out on their pilgrimage to an unknown paradise.

But a yet greater movement — indeed I might almost say a more fundamental and universal movement—is the pursuit of education by women. We read in history of great nations being suddenly seized with the impulse to wander abroad, leaving their homes

to migrate to distant lands of bluer skies, more fruitful soil, and keener sense of life; and this is the sort of phenomenon we are reminded of when we come to consider the "Woman's Movement" of the present time. But just as those tribal migrations prove, on closer examination, to have been caused, not by some vague inexplicable feeling, but by need, as well as by an instinctive love of action, so in this case, too, the impulse is due to necessity as well as to an urgent longing to get out of the narrow rut, and to a consciousness of strength. There is not at the present day a single class of women which has not been stirred by this impulse. Those who are in narrow pecuniary circumstances, and are obliged to fight for their very existence, are by no means the only ones who join the ranks of strenuous women; nay, those whose material position is perfectly secure enter the lists also, and, from year to year, with every fresh influx of girls leaving school, the movement increases, and grows in geometrical progression. They want to have a share in all that the intellectual development of the present day has to offer; they want to train and emancipate their minds, and to be the equals of men as regards knowledge, education, in-

dependence. It is essentially a question of knowledge and of learning, and they demand admittance wherever knowledge is imparted, and privileges are conferred upon the basis of its acquisition. Jests about an army of "blue-stockings" or of "Amazons" long ago became out of place, and indeed, are more and more rarely heard; for the movement has grown far too powerful for derision, and become so closely bound up with the inmost being of woman-kind that it is now rightly spoken of as the "Woman's Movement."

Before I conclude this brief survey, you must allow me to glance cursorily at the attitude of the State towards the whole movement. Since in Germany the State has almost, if not altogether, the monopoly of instruction and education, it follows that its line of action in this matter is of the utmost importance.

It may be generally affirmed that in most directions the State meets the new educational movement with sympathy, wisdom and active help. It is due to it that many of the above-mentioned institutions for the promotion of learning have been established; it contributes to the support of others, having approved of their foundation. It is fitting that it should not be too ready to take the initiative, but

should prefer to leave it to associations, municipal bodies, or private individuals to originate and execute new ideas, and so long as it does not repress healthy movements, no harm is done when it resists ill-considered haste, and, generally speaking, checks rather than urges on the pace. In its own special province, that of elementary education, it has just introduced an important and most satisfactory improvement. The new regulations for the course of instruction at Teachers' Training Colleges are excellent and altogether praiseworthy. The two following rules in particular now determine the arrangement of the whole curriculum: first, that a gradually progressive course should be pursued from the lowest to the highest class, so that, in place of wearisome and spiritless repetition, and monotonous drill in the same task, genuine educational advance may be made; secondly, that in the upper grades interest should be aroused in the principal achievements of those branches of knowledge with which the teachers are most nearly concerned, as well as in the methods and objects of science and learning generally. Both these ideas are in accordance with wishes long felt by teachers themselves, and it may confidently be expected that the banishment

of the old routine will lead to the gradual disappearance of the abuses which were so closely associated with it, and that the new arrangements will produce as great an improvement in the elementary schools as in the Training Colleges. The State is also determined, in common with those who wish to promote healthy progress, that no false or obsolete knowledge shall be imparted, but that the idea of duty and right shall be instilled into all citizens; where this principle is concerned, elementary schools can and shall make no exceptions.

CHAPTER VI

MEANING AND VALUE OF EDUCATION

This review shows that we are justified in speaking of a modern educational movement, and in regarding it as a distinctive feature of our age. The real question, however, with which we are concerned is that of the ethical and social value of this pursuit of education. But before investigating this, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the essential meaning of education generally, and of the particular character of modern education. We are not now dealing with what is called "Civilisation." Education and civilisation are, of course, very closely connected; but we are accustomed, and rightly so, to regard civilisation as something external, which may be enjoyed even by those who are little influenced by real culture. We are here concerned with culture.

There are countless definitions of education, and their multiplicity proves how many-sided education is, and from how many aspects it

may be regarded. If, in the first place, we consider man with reference to his innate capacities, education will mean the full development of all his latent powers; by education a man will be enabled to become what he really is, or rather, what he has it in him to be. In this view, the highest aim of education is the complete unfolding of a person's individuality, and, as a result of such self-realisation, an attitude of freedom towards the external world—a return, as it were, to such freedom and simplicity as is the surest token of a self-determined personality:

> "He stands undaunted at the helm:
> The ship is tossed by wind and waves,
> But wind and waves shake not his heart."

If, in the next place, we consider man in his relations towards that Nature of which he is a part, education will be seen to have a two-fold function to perform. On the one hand, it will be a weapon of defence against Nature, a protection against her threat of overwhelming force; so far as possible, it will master Nature, gaining possession of her secrets by cunning and skill, in order to subjugate her and make her a willing servant. On the other hand, it is the office of education to lead, by knowledge of Nature, to reconciliation with

her; to disclose the intimate connection between all things that have life; and to knit yet closer every healthy bond by which they are already connected. From this standpoint, again, the highest aim in view is power and liberty.

If, again, we consider man in the light of history, and as a member of the human race, then education will be that which renders a man capable of gathering up with sympathetic understanding all that is human, and of reflecting it again in his own person, which keeps him open-hearted and open-minded, giving him the key to the innermost soul of others, and which makes his intellect and his emotions delicately responsive organs, able to see and hear in regions where the senses are of no avail. Through education he will feel himself at home in many places, and yet will shut himself up in none; he will learn how to shape his own life steadfastly and worthily amidst change and instability, how to make it dignified amidst monotony and triviality, how to gain self-control and patience in face of human littleness, and how to maintain an attitude of reverence towards all that is human and divine.

Lastly, if we think of education in the narrowest sense, in its bearing on the special

calling of each individual, then it may be defined as the sum of all that knowledge and skill which are necessary if the duties of our calling are to be discharged with thoroughness, freedom, and ease. Thus in this case, again, freedom is the final result: it is built up in the exercise of one's profession, and is the reward of those who, instead of being weighed down by the burden of their daily work, so use their knowledge and power that the exercise of them becomes second nature. This education in the narrower sense of the word, technical or professional education, must never be underrated; particular training is the normal starting-point for general education, and without the former the latter is difficult, if not impossible, to attain.

Some among you have very likely smiled at my enthusiastic panegyric on education, or have even felt annoyed. You have thought of the kind of man dubbed "educational pedant," and of all that has been justly said about him. But those who believe in education as I have tried to define it, will be among the strongest opponents of such sham educationists. For the pedant is to the educated man what Wagner is to "Faust," or what a lay figure is to a living one—a thing that has no life save in its own

conceit! The pedant is devoid alike of toleration and of patience, of freedom and of reverence, of personality and of love; the fruits of knowledge all vanish in his hand, and he holds but husks, which he takes to be the inmost essence of real things.

But, besides these, there have appeared from time to time genuine and serious anti-educationists—no ignorant barbarians, but educated men, who yet oppose education. The attitude is obviously paradoxical, and such that the fallacy might almost be left to perish through its own inconsistency. There have been, and, indeed, still are, highly-educated Romanticists who, having failed to reap all the benefits they had expected to receive from great culture, turn and abuse education, contrasting it unfavourably with Nature, or Life, or something else utterly indefinable. That is no new thing; the eighteenth century had its Rousseau, and we have still our petty but not uninfluential Rousseaus. When they are not opposing education in order to commend a life of impulse, or in order to shake themselves free from all concern for their fellow men, and from all responsibility for the course of human affairs, what they attack is not really education as such, but a false, narrow, corrupt view of edu-

cation. This was notably the case with Rousseau; therefore our thanks are due to him, and on many points we are at one with him. But we cannot acquiesce when he simply extols Nature at the expense of Education. If there is here no delusory playing with words, and if no extraneous idea is imported into the term Nature, we cannot subscribe to his formula, "Back to Nature." We ought certainly to be sincere, unaffected, without hypocrisy, and we ought not to let ourselves be captivated by anything that is at variance with our truest being; but Nature cannot be our teacher on all points, for she lacks two elements which to us are absolutely indispensable, that is to say, self-determining personality and goodness. These are not to be learned from Nature, but are found only in life as revealed in history.

But finally, there are yet others—and that among the ranks of our friends—in whom unqualified praise of education arouses mistrust. There are earnest Christians who warn us against esteeming education too highly, and insist at the same time that it can never be of more than limited value. Their position is easy to understand, for, in the first place, in all that concerns the higher life, a sure and confident knowledge of one's aim and ideal is of

such paramount importance that it can compensate for many shortcomings, so that a truly religious man will always be an educated man, though he may happen to possess little "culture." In the second place, education of any reality and depth can only be the outcome of painful conflict and hard struggle; toil and effort are required to win it and to guard it. Now, since this truth is often forgotten by superficial thinkers, who confuse education with mere erudition; and since they further overlook the fact that education matures but slowly, and involves a lengthy process of gradual growth, or of being educated, with many successive stages, the suspicion with which some earnest people regard our watchword "Education" is well justified. But education itself is not to blame for the superficial and inadequate ideas current about it; therefore every word uttered against it should be carefully weighed. Moreover, it is hardly wise to pass disparaging judgments on education, because religion confers such great blessings. Certainly the want of education is least felt where there is a genuine religious life, so complete in itself as to be capable of transfiguring the whole personality. But if an individual possesses this inner light, and has little educa-

tion, he is restricted in his outer activities by very definite limitations; while certain specific vocations may be open to him, he is excluded from most, and he must leave to others the work of improving and preserving this world of ours. The fact remains, then, that the only opponents of education are those who are ignorant of its nature, or, at least, mistaken with regard to it—while those who declaim against it usually find themselves in the curiously inconsistent position of thinking in its terms and speaking its language. And even though it may be true that wherever education is decried, we have an indication that there is something unsound or corrupt in the prevailing educational movement, it is utter folly or audacity to wage war against education as such, or to represent it as a matter of no importance. To combat education by any means, or in any kind of utterance, witty or otherwise, with the object of making it appear contemptible or superfluous in the eyes of the people, is to incur the heavy responsibility of confusing and outraging all sound beliefs. From this point of view I regard as very questionable the influence of even Tolstoi's writings, and can only find sorry consolation in the thought that most of

his readers remain unaffected by them, except to the extent of feeling a passing emotion. On the whole, indeed, we may venture to predict that neither these nor any other attempts at repression can check that mighty, urgent impulse towards education which is working in our midst. The movement is stronger and more full of life than ever before; and naturally so, since it is only in our days that the whole world has for the first time become as it were one single arena. Modern facilities of communication have broken down all barriers, and at the present day countless kaleidoscopic impressions assail our senses on every side. The light of publicity flashes upon everything; nothing is hid from the eyes of the world. Competition, in every sense of the word, is the ruling principle everywhere, and in any one question endless others are involved. An uneducated man is utterly helpless in face of such a state of affairs, and there will soon be no quiet corner left, in which he may take refuge. His only arm of defence is education, and in this fact lies the prime cause of the educational movement of to-day.

CHAPTER VII

MAIN FEATURES OF MODERN EDUCATION

Let us now consider the principal direction in which this educational movement manifests itself; for although all education is fundamentally one, from time to time various aspects come to the fore and preponderate. In my opinion, the following stand out clearly as the principal features in our present pursuit of education. First, it shows a hearty preference for such knowledge as is intrinsically real; secondly, its most serious aim is to gain independence, economic and personal; and thirdly, it reveals a longing for a keener sense of life and a desire to obtain a fuller share in life, in one's relations both to the outer world and to the inner self.

I have said that the new educational movement discloses, in the first place, a strong preference for real knowledge, or, as it might with equal truth be expressed, for a knowledge of the real. To provide this is the object of most

of the above-mentioned institutions and enterprises. It is a pleasure to genuine scholars to observe the unfeigned eagerness and zeal with which the pursuit of scientific knowledge is carried on to-day. Fine words and interesting tales no longer suffice; men want to know the world of reality, and to study the progress made by knowledge; that is why single lectures on popular science are being abandoned more and more in favour of consecutive courses of instruction. There is increased interest in the history of the discovery and recognition of reality and truth; or, at any rate, an earnest desire to see facts as they are, and to guard against deceptive appearances. But the most notable point of all is the manner in which the two leading ideas of modern science have spread in all directions, and have already become the test by which to measure the validity of knowledge generally—the theory, that is, of the conservation and transmutation of energy, and the doctrine of evolution. We rejoice that this is the case, and it is a mistake to imagine that it is a step which can ever be retraced. The perception that every special form of energy is an integrant part of a general system, in and through which alone it exists,

and that any individual phenomenon possesses reality only as a link in an evolutionary series, is such a revelation as, once perceived, can never again be lost sight of; for through it we are enabled to discern and to comprehend as much of the world around us as it is given to us to know. In this sense the characteristic of our times may justly be said to be the pursuit of realism, and the description is one that we can use gladly, not reproachfully. We rejoice to live in an age in which, in spite of ever-abundant stupidity and superstition, there is such an overpowering impulse towards reality. Honesty and sincerity are at the bottom of it—honest work and sincere endeavour—and I do not hesitate to ascribe to this tendency a high ethical significance. We shall duly examine its limitations, but at any rate those who strive with a single mind to gain a knowledge of the real are, in so doing, showing moral activity, and those who, for the same object, make sacrifice of strength and of means, are making these sacrifices for a moral end.

We saw, in the second place, that this educational movement reveals a fixed intention to gain, by means of education, an independence, both general and economic. What is it that

urges crowds of workmen, full of zeal for education, to devote their scanty leisure to technical training and to the further cultivation of their minds? Not merely the yearning for knowledge as such, but also the keen desire to improve their condition, and to win for themselves a more secure position in the labour market by means of increased intelligence and skill. What, again, is one of the principal causes of the great Woman's movement, to which I have alluded? Here, too, it is the desire for independence, the wish of each one to be self-supporting, and, by means of a fixed occupation, to win for herself a definite and secure place in the world. This is an altogether praiseworthy aim, and may indeed be regarded as an ethical tendency in the strictest sense of the word. A human being, man or woman alike, who has no vocation and no definite sphere is a useless person. One's calling is the backbone of one's life, and that which lends it stability; without a settled sphere of duty and the consciousness of filling a place where one is really required, no life can be healthy. Now, since there are very many girls to whose lot matrimony will never fall, and since domestic work has diminished enormously in quantity as compared with former days, it follows that

women must seek for other vocations, and be admitted to them. Nay, one must go further yet, and agree with those who say that no girl ought to be brought up with a view to marriage only, and solely as a future helpmeet for man, but ought rather to be so educated as to be qualified for the duties of some suitable calling. This is a perfectly just demand, not only because the eventuality of marriage is always uncertain, not only because of the importance of improving the pitiable position of countless widows, whose poverty and dependence were formerly regarded as their inevitable destiny, but also because the stage of development we have reached requires that every normal citizen should be able to fend for him or herself, and should look upon independence as both a duty and a right. In other times these matters were regarded differently, but a new epoch has arisen—an epoch to which we are proud to belong. Further results that may be looked for from this dawning movement of reform are the raising of the moral standard of the female sex where this is required, and an ethical improvement in the relations of the two sexes towards each other. It is true that the movement is not free from its own new and peculiar dangers, of which

we must speak later; nothing human is without its darker side; but there can scarcely be any doubt that some of the blackest shadows which disfigure the whole circumstances and lot of women can be swept away, or at any rate lessened, by the growth of economic independence among them. It is impossible, for example, that prostitution, either in its coarser or more refined form, should continue to its present extent if the education of women is made to include preparation for definite callings. Then this new order of affairs must necessarily re-act upon men also, and on this point I heartily agree with Mr. Wychgram, one of the most ardent promoters of the woman's movement, who writes as follows in the opening article of his new periodical, "Women's Education": "The furtherance of women's education will, if it is conducted on sound principles and by right means, prove a blessing both to women themselves and to society generally. For there are two chief considerations: by better training of the feminine intellect we are, in the first place, raising the general position of the sex; and, by doing this, we believe that we are, in the second place, enriching our whole life of culture, by importing into it a new, valuable and repro-

ductive element. To womankind we are giving a higher and nobler independence—a word that can and must be understood in a double sense, ethical and economic. It is true in an ethical sense, because, whatever may be said to the contrary, it is the highest possible development of his mental powers that best fits the man of to-day to take a serious view of life and its duties, and because, in the case of every thoughtful nature, such a grasp of life becomes in turn an inexhaustible source of happiness. In the economic sense, independence raises us above that sad plight in which we are obliged to live by other's toil, and are unable ourselves to produce any work of value to others. This touches upon questions of the deepest import, and if no thinking man can doubt that happiness consists in work—rightly undertaken, executed, and remunerated—then we must enable women to perform such work."

We observed, in the third place, that there is manifested in this movement a yearning for a greater sense of life, and for a fuller share in life in all its relations. But this is a matter by no means easy to understand aright. It is not a craving for mere pleasure that I mean, although that, too, might to some extent be justified, and it is very easy for those to scorn

it who can easily procure for themselves hundreds of pleasures unattainable by the objects of their righteous indignation. Nor do I mean the latest romantic fancy for frenzied and artificial excitement of the senses; such a practice is the very opposite of true education, and absolutely inimical to it. What I do mean is the endeavour to escape from the dull monotony which is all that life itself still offers to thousands, and to enrich and invigorate existence by widening the range. This purpose has now become a mighty force, animating many who feel that the mere alternation of night and day is not sufficient to keep a man's faculties healthy, but that he further requires change during the day, and that he can only remain vigorous and alert if he can look beyond his immediate occupation, and share in the general happiness of humanity. But if this wider life of his is to extend beyond the crudest pleasures, he cannot dispense with a certain amount of progressive education, and that which will bind him to others who have similar aims, for in this matter none ever attains his end in isolation. This truth is felt by the aspirants themselves, for it is by no mere chance or coincidence that the movements for social and educational reform work together hand in

hand to bring about the enrichment of life. From the ethical and Christian point of view it is impossible to find fault with this struggle, for in view of the fact that every life is considered to have an eternal significance, the end of life is Life itself.

I have tried to indicate the most important and distinctive features of the educational movement of the present day. In the process its ethical and social value have revealed themselves in every direction, without being in any way obtruded by me, and apart from any mention of particular effects. And indeed, numerous as these are, it is not in them that the prime import of the movement consists. I may, for example, point out the beneficial effect that improved education will have upon the question of the housing of the poor—that most urgent problem of social life. Since we may reasonably regard the condition of the home as a fairly exact measure of the education of those who live in it, and since we everywhere observe that higher education leads to a demand for better dwellings, it is obvious that in this point domestic circumstances are affected by an intellectual impulse, and that this can easily be proved. I may also call attention to the fact that higher education

tends to promote social equality, and that by it the different ranks and classes of a nation are drawn together, and learn to understand and sympathise with each other. In this connection University Extension lectures are of special value, and it is easy to perceive that underlying all such undertakings is a strong social element, namely, that mutual recognition that makes for unity between the classes. And lastly, I may observe, that educated men are, as a rule, prudent and thoughtful; therefore extreme and eccentric opinions will give way to a growing sense of the necessary limitations imposed by circumstances, and this again will tend to the establishment of social peace. But, as I said before, any particular effects must only be regarded as parts of the general result, which consists in helping the individual by means of higher education to become a real personality, and so to increase his social value also. We cannot see the goal that awaits a nation united in peaceful work, in mutual recognition and in solicitude of class for class, nor the final outcome of a "universal ethical alliance," in which "all men bind themselves in one, with all their strength, with heart and soul, intellect and affection;" for these, like all ideals, lie beyond our vision. But this at

least is certain, that we are not turning our backs upon them, but are in the right way to attain them, if we promote the educational movement in every direction, and, in the midst of our anxiety for economic reform, never cease to look for the ideal, which is after all the most truly real.

CHAPTER VIII

DANGERS OF MODERN EDUCATION

At the same time we should be guilty of thoughtlessness and of dangerous superficiality if we were content with merely emphasising the great value of the educational movement of the present day from the ethical and social standpoint, and with urging that for this reason it must be encouraged and made use of in every possible way. Rather it is our duty to examine the objections which have been raised against it, and to recognise the special dangers attaching to it; by so doing we shall gain a clearer apprehension of its moral and social significance.

The first danger we have to encounter seems to be that of half-education. Not only "reactionaries," but even men who are anxious for social improvement and in favour of healthy progress, are among those who view with suspicion the present educational movement, and the institutions founded in connection

with it. To these we readily confess that the special dangers of half-education—vagueness, confusion, ridiculous conceit, and discontent—cannot immediately be removed, and may, indeed, in existing circumstances, increase for a time among a certain section. But to oppose the present educational movement and try to repress it on that account, would be the most perverse course of action possible. We cannot repress it, for it is far too strong; we should only force it back in the direction of bad teaching and poor methods of instruction. One cannot hope to combat the dangers of half-education by condemning people to no education at all, but only by providing them with thorough education. The best men must offer themselves for the work, and the best books must be written to facilitate it. While showing to students the most important results of the sciences, it is essential at the same time to arouse in them an interest in scientific methods, and a sense of the enormous difficulty of attaining to positive knowledge in any department. This accomplished—and it can be done—the main point is achieved, and the greatest risk of half-education is averted. Certainly, none can soar aloft to the highest stage of scientific knowledge, nor is there any

royal road to learning; great thinkers will stand by themselves to the end of time, and there will always be a kind of knowledge beyond the reach of the general public. But there are grades of knowledge as of education, and it is not true that clear and bracing air can be breathed only on the highest peak of the mountain. The bad associations of the words "popular science"—once almost equivalent to "pseudo-science"—need not always cling to them; indeed, I think they have to some extent vanished. When half-truths and trivialities are excluded, when reverence is awakened for truth itself and the investigation of it, and when the particular kind of knowledge set before each individual is likely to be of real use to him in his daily life, popular science is indeed good and true science.

This last condition brings us face to face with a second danger in the present educational movement—that of indiscriminate levelling. This peril appears to me to be very great, and most pernicious in its effects; it is, indeed, one of the principal causes of half-education at its worst, and would necessarily in the long run prove destructive of all real knowledge. In every single direction its results are fatal; its influence is anti-social,

inasmuch as it destroys the firm foundations of society and interferes with the free development of original and independent natures. By "levelling," I mean the endeavour to impose upon, or at least to prescribe for, all alike an exactly identical education, and as far as possible a precisely similar course of training, regardless of the distinctions of sex, individuality, or vocation. The consequences of such an attempt may be seen in the downfall of ancient schools of learning, but even we ourselves have seen something of these bad results, and shall have to buy our experience more dearly yet. It is easy enough to understand that, with the removal of various external barriers, the simplest plan might seem to be to enforce upon all and sundry one dead level of uniformity. But this is a notion based upon the most superficial and fatal idea of education—as if it were something that could be bestowed upon people like an object altogether outside of themselves, whereas in reality its possibility depends upon its association with the natural characteristics and special vocation of every individual. Apart from these it is mere surface lacquer—the nasty, sticky, shiny stuff that varnish is—or rather, it is something much worse, a poison, capable of destroying

vigour and health of mind and soul, and very often of body too. In this respect, I cannot acquit the modern woman's movement of grave errors in various directions, although it is but just to begin by mentioning certain excuses for them. Such are the hard struggle for daily bread and for bare existence, the laudable ambition to gain economic independence; and further, the lack of thorough qualifications, which hampers women's work; and the competition with male labour, which is too often forced upon them at the present day. I recognise the force of these excuses, but I can only regard as a grievous mistake the widespread theory that, because woman is the equal of man as regards human value, it straightway follows that the same course of instruction and the same occupations should be thrown open to her as to man. In some quarters there is even an affectation of treating the question of sex, in its bearing on work and civil standing generally, as altogether archaic and irrelevant; and where this leads, as it sometimes does, to an attack upon marriage itself, it is nothing short of social disintegration that we are threatened with. I retract nothing of all I have already urged in justification of the woman's movement; but I do

not admit the conclusion that women's education must be modelled exactly on the lines selected for the education of men, or that society is in a healthy state when women are competing with men in every sphere of action. Equality does not imply absolute parity, and woman would still not be inferior to man, even if it should be proved that her intellectual average is lower than his. To the eyes of all but the wilfully blind, it has, in any case, long ago been clear that physically woman is less fitted than man for a number of occupations. The difficult task that lies before us is to determine what professions are suitable for women, and to see that these are undertaken only under such conditions as are adapted to the mental and physical organisation of the sex. This task is but newly commenced, and until it is accomplished, there will be constant sacrifice of valuable human lives. In the meantime all care must be taken to avoid any levelling process, the injurious effects of which have already been exposed. Furthermore, although women must certainly not be brought up with a view solely to marriage and the care of a family, that must still be the primary aim of their education. If it is objected that, in the case of men, preparation

for domestic life is not the first consideration, the objection indicates at the outset a radically false view of the whole matter. This becomes yet more apparent when we find the old question of the Middle Ages being discussed once more, as to whether matrimony is in any case an estate worthy of a free personality. It is not only by frivolous pleasure-seekers that this question is raised, although the convictions of those who argue it are very far removed from those which, in former days, resulted in monasticism. But all such controversies appear to me to be merely symptoms of a temper both anti-social and opposed to the teaching of the Gospel, and I find in them the very disagreeable expression of a selfishness which is none the more creditable because it seeks to ally itself with the pursuit of education. Although there is unfortunately a whole literature on the subject already—a so-called "polite literature"—I purposely pass over in silence these impious attempts to undermine the foundations of society in this respect, and to throw open contempt upon marriage as an institution.

It is, however, not only in certain developments of the woman's movement and of the sex-problem that this tendency to unlimited

and dangerous levelling appears; it may be observed in other directions also. As a clear expression of the opposite aim, by which we ought rather to be inspired, I will quote a piece of character-drawing from a wonderful speech by Mommsen on the Emperor William I. He says: "The Emperor William was, as all true men should be, a man with a profession. He completely mastered the duties belonging to it, and, as his high calling as a soldier demanded, he spent his life in the theory and practice of military science. There are not many who have as seriously devoted the years of youth and manhood alike to the art of war as he did. Consequently he was amateurish in nothing. He delighted in beauty, and was wont to follow with enjoyment the discussion of learned questions." This shows us the element that must be introduced, if we are to counteract excessive uniformity. Special training, with a view to individual vocation, must be offered in the first place, and must become both the starting- and connecting-point for all further advance in knowledge, which must henceforth grow round this in concentric, but ever-widening circles. Such a method both avoids the dilettanteism resulting from attempts at absolute uniformity, and at the same time

succeeds in producing that true veneration for knowledge, which tends more than anything to open the minds of those who possess it, and to make people more modest.

But there is yet a third danger that must be faced; it arises from the special character of the modern educational movement, with its eager endeavour to attain knowledge of the real—an aspiration which may be productive of the greatest good, but unless it is combined with strict moral training, will do harm. Goethe once said of one of his friends that his ability and learning were greater than his strength of character was able to bear; and in another connection we find the profound saying: "Everything that sets free our intelligence without giving us self-control, is fatal." That is a terse and striking epitome of the matter; but it is a heavy task that devolves upon educationists. We have to learn that, with all our excellent institutions for the spread of learning and knowledge, we have only accomplished half—nay, not half—of our mission. If we are unable to influence the morals of those whom we are instructing, it is a dangerous work that we are carrying on. All earnest search after truth and pursuit of knowledge does indeed include a high moral element,

but this requires to be brought to the light, and explicitly shown to the learners. Above all, the personality of the teacher must be so armed with the moral force of truth as to be able to exhibit it and impress it upon others; in every kind of teaching—in the higher grades no less than in the lower—the personality of the teacher is of pre-eminent importance. We can learn all sorts of things from books and by other impersonal means through which knowledge is transmitted, but we can be educated only by educators—by personalities, whose own force and life make a deep impression upon us. But who can deny that in this respect the work of education at the present time leaves much to be desired? The pursuit of knowledge so eagerly carried on among us now calls for a type of personality full of hope, love, faith, moral power, more mature and possessiug a deeper sense of life than ever before. It calls for a personality which will enable every pupil to see that all true education—or formation of character—is transformation, painful in process, but resulting in freedom; something old must perish, something new must come into being and wax strong!

Very closely connected with this is another

point which goes to the root of the matter: all true education starts from a complete and definite theory of existence, and it is only valuable in so far as it enables men to see life steadily and see it whole. Yet such a comprehensive view of the world cannot be other than idealistic; that is to say, it must be rooted in the conviction that personal life and moral consciousness are worth more and rank higher than any mere life of nature, and that, as it is in God that we live and move and have our being, we are accountable to Him. But are the intellectual leaders of our nation of the present day animated by such a conception of the universe—that is to say, by a faith that is sure of itself? Who dare affirm it? Since the Enlightenment movement came to an end at the beginning of the nineteenth century, we have had no one consistent, elevating, and ennobling theory of life. Neither the subsequent revival of religious belief nor the great idealistic systems of philosophy have succeeded in giving our people such an outlook on the world. This state of affairs, which has lasted so long already, this lack of faith and diversity of beliefs, is most prejudicial to all healthy progress to-day; it is the cause of our weakness in every direction, including our ineffec-

tiveness in face of the political and ecclesiastical system of Roman Catholicism. We have practically prevailed against materialism as a philosophy; we may liken it to a disease that time and the healing influence of nature have cured; but we are very far from being really sound yet, for such a cure does not produce positive health. It was no theologian, but an opponent of theology, the philosopher John Stuart Mill, who, in his autobiography, wrote as follows: "When the philosophic minds of the world can no longer believe its religion, or can only believe it with modifications amounting to an essential change of its character, a transitional period commences, of weak convictions, paralysed intellects, and growing laxity of principle, which cannot terminate until a renovation has been effected in the basis of their belief, leading to the evolution of some faith, whether religious or merely human, which they can really believe: and when things are in this state, all thinking or writing which does not tend to promote such a renovation, is of very little value beyond the moment." If we omit the expression "merely human faith," which to me is meaningless in contra-distinction to religious faith, Mill's is a most accurate description of the present situa-

tion, and of what must necessarily ensue. It is useless to expect that the mere study of particular sciences can avert it; for in this matter neither specialised learning, nor knowledge as a whole, can avail anything. Men must be exhorted to retire into their own souls, in order that, while immense realities throng upon them through their acquaintance with the sciences, they may not overlook or forget the real nature of Reality itself. They themselves, in the first instance, *are* this Reality—their souls, that existence of theirs which is lifted above nature. This, to be sure, is a matter, not of knowledge, but of faith, since it can be present in the mind only as a struggling and growing conviction; yet it is the motive power of all mental, and ultimately of all social life. "It is characteristic of belief to impel to action; it is characteristic of unbelief to destroy the joy of work, to deny to man his creative destiny, and so to force him back upon bare existence and primitive instinct, till humanity, grown tired of the attempt to spiritualise existence, wearies at last of life itself." Now modern science has necessarily adopted the genetic method, which consists in going back everywhere to first beginnings, and in tracing things to their original

elements, and to the lowest forms from which they appear to have sprung; and this does, indeed, tend to cause great confusion in weak and unstable minds, and to confirm any inclination they may already have to underestimate their own human value. It is not a state of affairs that is bound to last for ever; the time must come when it will be recognised that the gradual development of truth results, like consecutive acts of creation, in bringing to light new marvels of great and valuable power; but in the meantime we are called upon to put forth all our strength to cope with the situation. As far as it is in our power to influence the course of events, we must never encourage the dissemination of knowledge or spread of education, unless at the same time the moral consciousness of those who are taught is invigorated, the inner harmony of their personalities strengthened, and the eternal significance of their lives enriched. This must be our constant aim, but especially with regard to instruction in social history and social questions. Of all current phrases, none is more open to objection than the saying that social life must be regarded in the light mainly, if not altogether, of economics, and economics be considered by itself, and absolutely apart from any-

thing else. Such a dictum is objectionable in the first place because it is false; but it is also regrettable because it lends support to blind and petty prejudices, and hinders ethical progress. Those who give utterance to it in good faith, imagining that such a view will simplify matters and win for them more ready hearing, do not know what they are doing; and fortunately they are refuted by their own practice. At the bottom of all great social questions and all intellectual problems, seekers after truth will always light upon the moral and—closely bound up with it—religious element; these can never be neglected without doing injury both to facts as they really are. and to mankind. But it is no use for us to try to idealise that universe presented to us by a knowledge of the external world and embellish it with all kinds of æsthetic notions: quick eyes will see through the device, and we shall not thus attain our object. Nothing can satisfy, on the one hand, the sense of the individual value of the human soul, and the requirements of its inner life; and on the other, the ideal set before us of the universal brotherhood of mankind, except the Christian idea of God—"God is the Lord, and He is love." As we were created by Him and for Him, so too our knowledge and education

must be rooted and grounded in Him. This feeling lifts us above the region of the transitory into that of the everlasting and eternal; it ennobles the meanest work, and cancels all mere surface value. In this spirit, then, we must work and educate.

Every member of this Congress is equally persuaded of the truth I have just enunciated, and is convinced that, as beseems Protestants, it is our duty to fulfil this task in enlightened agreement with the traditions of our Evangelical Church. But how much there is to do, and how lacking we are in zeal, assiduity, and persistent effort! The educational movement of to-day has laid open to us an immense field of action, and none can excuse himself by saying that he does not wish to waste his time sowing on the stony ground or among thorns. There is a general readiness to hear, to learn, to exchange ideas, and to ponder new conceptions. There is keen and living interest in the deepest questions which concern human life, as well as in social problems—issues which are most intimately connected, and are, indeed, fundamentally one. The responsibility would be ours if this modern pursuit of education were to end in despair, either because men were not given the bread

of life they ask, or because that offered them had ceased to be life-giving; it would be our fault if it were to result in disgust and scepticism, and in the conclusion that reality is barren, and knowledge fruitless. That must never be. May to-day's Congress help to intensify our feeling of responsibility towards our people, and to increase our strength!

All discoveries—nay, all knowledge, for the time being so exciting in its novelty—soon become cheap and insignificant; but all the same it has eternal life in it, if it gives depth and fuller life to the inward being, and help in the great work of transformation into a higher self.

THE MORAL TEACHINGS OF JESUS

A paper read by Dr. W. Herrmann of Marburg at the Evangelical Social Congress held at Darmstadt in 1903; and published separately, and in an enlarged form, in 1904.

CHAPTER IX

THE SENSE IN WHICH THE GOSPEL BECOMES A REAL POWER

The Gospel teaches us that we escape from a barren existence only when we are ready to live for others of our own free will. It is then that we are made to feel more keenly how miserable and empty is the existence of a man intent upon seeking his own. It can, however, be to us a Gospel, only if it further actually brings and proclaims to us the beginning of a life with power. It must act upon us as a renewing force. Yet if it is really to accomplish this it must mean something more than a collection of ideas, which it is our duty and desire to accept. It is, indeed, certain that if we do not dismiss these ideas, but let them in course of time become habitual to us, our resolutions may be very powerfully influenced by them, especially by the thought of a Father in Heaven, inflexibly stern yet full of infinite goodness and mercy. Still, however

pregnant the ideas so freely bestowed upon us by the messengers of the Gospel, they can never do more than stimulate the nature that we have: they cannot transform us.

Only in so far as we are able to apprehend the truth of doctrines can we make them our own. We must understand their purport, and perceive that the idea contained is the expression of a reality, revealed to us ourselves. When we find a thought expressing something which we have been made to feel in such an experience, it becomes in a peculiar sense our own. But if, without this, we try to adopt it, we may end by quietly changing it, till it suits ourselves; and if we do not even do this, our inmost being can have nothing to do with it at all. To say that we want to appropriate it can then only mean that, in our intercourse with others, we refuse to say anything against it. It constantly happens that the ideas of the Gospel are only "appropriated" by people in this sense. Many fancy they possess them, to whom they are no more than something they refuse to attack, but are unable to utilise. And many whose earnest endeavour it is to utilise them, work at them continually till they have made them assume such a form as they can assimilate. The result

is not that they are transformed, but that the ideas of the Gospel are altered by their own character. The power of the Gospel can never be effectual in its working, while people are so insincere as to propose "to appropriate by faith" the ideas contained therein.

The ideas are always so shaped that their truth is obvious to those alone who in their inward being experience a great transformation. The very conception of God as the Almighty Father is true only when it expresses this kind of experience. When the idea is presented as the message of the Gospel, it may indeed attract us by promising deliverance; but if of the contents of the Gospel we learn nothing more, it will soon recall to our minds many of our own experiences testifying in the opposite direction. In a world so full of suffering no Heavenly Father meets our gaze. Nor can it be in our own hearts that the idea originates of the everlasting power of good, as inexhaustible goodness towards ourselves; for here the consciousness is present that our own nature is altogether in contrast to such goodness. A Gospel, to be deserving of the name, must so operate upon us that we may embrace as very truth the above conception of God. It must have the power so to influence us that

the divine character—the capacity freely to live for others—begins to take shape in us. Unless this happens, we can have no real understanding of the message concerning the Father in Heaven, since otherwise we cannot number ourselves among those who are ruled by His goodness.

The Gospel is a message of glad tidings only because, when it really reaches a man, it does not present him with mere ideas, but furnishes practical proof of the love of God, convincing him of God's infinite goodness towards him. Then begins that inward transformation whereby our lives may be fashioned according to Gospel ideas. We must detach ourselves from what hitherto we have desired for ourselves, and be ready to sacrifice it for the community. Otherwise the Gospel has not yet given us a foretaste of heaven. If we have no free and God-like goodness towards others, we cannot believe in God's goodness towards us. But the inward emancipation from accustomed habits of possession and enjoyment is possible on one condition only. We must ourselves hold the conviction that the whole meaning of our lives is different from what we had been wont to imagine. We must ourselves experience a new fact, the influence of

which upon us is so strong as to lessen the power over our souls of all our former possessions and enjoyments. Our own advantage may be seen to consist in a fact of this kind. We may, for example, recognise clearly what a loss it is to us if vast numbers of our people do not, and possibly cannot, rejoice in the sense of nationality. It is obvious that if we do perceive this fact we may promote social activity and stir up the will to help; for stupidity is always unsocial. Yet social efforts based upon prudence are bound by narrow restrictions, whereas there are no limits to the readiness to serve and to help that may be produced by the Gospel. For it results in an experience so rich that it can deliver a man from all cares concerning his own life, making him so free that the commonwealth, rather than his own advantage, really becomes the object of his desires.

The Gospel not only sets ideas before us, but presents us with a mighty fact, such as, once experienced, gives to our life such height and depth as seems to enable us for the first time to perceive its immensity. This fact, which we must not merely "believe," but ourselves see, is the Person of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament it is enclosed in a series

of narratives, as to the authenticity of which no efforts of learning are able to tell us anything very definite. To many Christians the narratives are nevertheless a matter of absolute certainty, while to others they are not so. The decision of this question does not depend upon the moral attitude or religious earnestness of the individual Christian; nor does its determination affect his spiritual fate, or the relation in which he stands to God. On the other hand, if a man is to lay hold of the Person of Jesus, as a reality which he himself cannot choose but admit, he must needs be morally alive; and upon such contact with Jesus Himself depends that inward sense of liberty which constitutes the Christian. Those who are not struck by the sincerity, strength, and wonderful assurance of the man Christ Jesus have no suspicion of what Christianity is. The decision which prompts a Christian to forsake the ways of the world and follow Jesus, leaves them all untouched; their hearts are strangers to the joy that cannot be taken away, and to the delight in active service, which mark the essential difference between one who is, and one who is not, a Christian.

But if we are indeed to apprehend the Person of Jesus in all its wonderful reality, we need

a two-fold method of transmission. One of these is Holy Scripture; the other, human life, permeated and kindled by remembrance of Him—or, to use the old names, Scripture and tradition. Once we have begun to recognise as our greatest good this contact with the Person of Jesus, we shall seek the society of those whom His power has stirred, and the assemblies where He is likely to be preached. Before long we shall note further that, on any ideals we already possess, a new light is thrown continually by thronging memories of Him derived from Scriptural accounts. Thus the mystical power of His Person gives to Biblical tradition a value beyond any that dogma can confer, and, at the same time, is the warrant for complete freedom in scientific study of the Bible. For if we are convinced that this tradition reveals to us the highest gift the world can bestow, we shall also see that here, if anywhere, those laws must faithfully be observed that render possible the successful investigation of reality. Thus the Christian who knows and seeks nothing higher in all the world than the inward life—that is, the Person of Jesus in its power over the mind—is carried far above the conflict which is now agitating Protestantism; above the anxious piety that hardens into a

legalism devoid of morality; and no less far above such investigation of truth as, sensible of no bonds of living history to bring it into touch with the traditional, is lacking in all piety.

That Jesus of whom we ourselves have laid hold as a reality, undeniable and wonderful, works in us a transformation exceeding great in power. For contact with Him means that there dawns upon us a revelation of God that can never again be obscured. The first page of a book widely read at the present day contains the statement that no man who has once learned to know Jesus Christ can ever again be quite what he was before. One who can echo Harnack in this, feels that contact with the Person of Jesus marked a turning-point in his life. He may, indeed, often have to confess that it has not been followed in his case by very much that is new, but he will surely always admit in his heart that it might have been. In the Person of Jesus we at least seem to recognise a constant cause of uneasiness—of a disquietude that prevents us from settling down too comfortably in the world. Now, so long as that is our experience with regard to Jesus, He is indeed above us; and only in proportion as He Himself stands in

that relation towards us can His words bring us a Gospel. Above all, they can really convince us, only when they interpret and throw new light upon the realities around us. We are told how Jesus Himself endeavoured to remind men of the traces of God's goodness revealed in their own lives. Yet after all, ultimately the one fact of our experience that lends undoubted testimony to the goodness of God towards us is the manifestation of Jesus Himself. It is when our inmost being is stirred and quickened by His Person that we are able to grasp something of the realities of which He speaks; and then, and not till then, His words become to us a gospel of power. But the fact that Jesus reveals the power and the goodness of God will soon be felt when once we realise that if we call to remembrance His will and His actions, they make demands upon us which are eternally binding. Jesus made provision for this by His death upon the Cross, and by explaining that Death in the Last Supper.

CHAPTER X

CONFLICT BETWEEN THE EVANGELISTIC AND MODERN OUTLOOK

Yet the Cross itself would be of no avail if it happened that in seeking our moral goal we had to look beyond Jesus Himself. Along the path of duty He must always be our Guide. This implies not only certainty on our part that He offers no opposition to duties indisputably self-evident to us, but, further, the ever fresh experience that it is the power of His Spirit which actually reveals to us those duties. If we were divided from Him in the work in which we ourselves recognised moral necessity, it would mean a separation radical indeed. We can continue to be Christians, only if we can honestly confess that the growth of moral earnestness and liberty within us brings us into closer touch with Him. Once we perceive any civil obligation of our age to be due to a *moral* necessity, we must be able to discern in it the victory of Jesus Christ. Other-

wise we are indeed severed from Him, and circling already round another sun.

To many, however, at the present time it seems impossible in this kind of work to be reminded of Jesus as a power, and especially so to those who refuse to take the words of Jesus lightly, and possess such a view of the duties of our Age as people can only possess when they are not merely looking on, but are themselves taking part in its work. By rendering to themselves a clear account of the meaning and aim of their exertions, they soon become aware of their remoteness from Jesus, if indeed they think of Him at all.

Many of us devote our life-work to matters in which Jesus not only displayed no interest, but which He could not even know of, since they were not yet in being. Natural science was still unheard of; hence no glimmering conception of natural law enabled men to see an intelligible order in the realities around them; and systematic investigation had not yet extended the dominion of man over nature. In short, every kind of work arising out of natural science, with its own particular forms and aims, was for Jesus non-existent. It may, indeed, be said that both His attitude and ours towards morality are unaffected by that fact. Just as

a peasant of to-day may, as regards moral development, put to shame a natural philosopher, so Jesus might still be our Guide in all matters of morality, even though he lived in a world of narrow limitations, whereas to us there is an infinite depth of meaning in realities constituted in accordance with fixed laws.

We cannot, however, fail to note something else which made Jesus quite different from us. He betrayed no stronger interest in those departments of labour and business in which at that time able men were engaged. He was, indeed, acquainted with the husbandman toiling for the fruits of the earth and caring for his live stock. He was familiar also with the banker and the power of capital; yet there is not a word to show that He realised the importance of all these forms of work. He does not seem to have thought that the worth of a man is, as a rule, dependent upon his serving the community in some such way. Had He been as firmly persuaded as we are, that fidelity in this work of the world is the foundation in many a man of eternal righteousness, He would, one would think, have referred to it in some way, since His aim was to help men in their moral needs. Yet the Gospels nowhere relate that He did so; and it may

therefore be presumed that in His sight it was not in faithful performance of such work that true righteousness consisted. It necessarily followed as a result of His energy, that He sought to release men from the burden of toil, and set them free for the one thing needful.

There is no need to advance this as our own conclusion, for in every ear those words resound in which Jesus seems to deprive His disciples of the motive for remunerative work in general.

We are not to be anxious. But the origin of all work of the above description is anxiety concerning food and raiment; and the efforts to secure these are incumbent upon man because, since he is a man, he has outgrown a purely animal existence. In proportion as we really desire to be of more value than many sparrows, we develop wants which unaided Nature is not able to satisfy. Thereupon follows anxiety as to how they can be satisfied; and yet we are told: "Be not anxious." We cannot escape the force of this saying by supposing that in the land where Jesus lived the lavish gifts of nature sufficed for the daily needs of man; for it was just the same there as here. The seed, indeed, grew of itself, but it had first to be sown; and though one man might

support life on locusts and wild honey, all could not have done so. People were just as little able as we are to live without work—the result of anxiety with regard to food and clothing. Anxiety is always, moreover, the concomitant of labour. We must take thought for the safeguard of our possessions, in order to assure the success of our work, and we must consider whether the means we can command are sufficient for the task before us. It matters not whether these means of work are implements, landed property, capital; or the intellectual and physical powers we have inherited and developed, and the time at our disposal: such distinctions do not affect the main issue, as to the possibility of performing, without anxiety, the work imposed upon us the day we became men. We must resist the claims of the moment when they threaten to rob us of those instruments of work which will be required by the future. Yet Jesus tells us the reverse. We must, He says, be willing and ready to lend, and not only satisfy requests trenching upon our worldly possessions, but give even more than we are asked; and we must act in like manner with that which is often more precious to us than any goods—our time and our strength.

It is obvious that in this workaday world such principles are impracticable; no business can be conducted on these lines. Yet that is just what Jesus seems to want. His disciples must separate themselves from the world of business transactions; for the proceeds of such work are once for all made obnoxious to them by His words concerning riches: "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth." Accordingly, if a man has great possessions, the best thing he can do is to get rid of them in the form of alms; and to resist such counsel is to renounce perfection. Still, in the ultimate issue, all possession is wealth as compared to the penury of others; so that, if I try to retain for myself any such advantage, I am in bondage to riches. Nevertheless: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." How then can a disciple, who owns allegiance to the words of Jesus, be a citizen of that world where people work for gain and for possessions?

One may, indeed, try to explain the saying about anxiety in such a way as not to disturb the current mode of thought—Jesus only meant, it may be said, that amidst all anxiety about his earthly calling, a disciple must always keep his heart at liberty; and to no Christian need that ever be impossible. I share this

mode of thought, but I cannot agree that Jesus meant this by "Be not anxious." He could never have spoken so had He not thought it fitting that at that particular time the aims of industrial life should be left out of view; and this fact is shown even more clearly by His words concerning capital. The saying, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth," calls upon men to choose between directing their whole attention now to the good things of eternity, and allowing themselves to be tied down to earthly things. Any attempt to interpret this saying as capable of being obeyed while we retain our capital, would merely confirm the anticipation of Jesus, that riches are stronger than those who fancy they possess them. According to the view taken by Jesus, the earthly treasure we acquire becomes our master, hindering us from serving God. We cannot eventually escape from the oft-repeated reproach: Christendom as a whole is not sincerely Christian so long as it declares itself willing and bound to obey the traditional words of Jesus, but remains in possession, or, as Jesus would say, in the service, of capital. If we allow ourselves to take up a doubtful position on this point, the compromise will paralyse our whole Christian life. We shall assuredly be

separated from Jesus, not so much by seriously declining to obey some particular saying handed down to us as pronounced by Him at that particular time, as by assenting to the sum of all His words, if in practice that involves the refusal to obey them severally. It is inconsistency of this kind that insinuates into our trust in the Redeemer the constant doubt of His ability to redeem us if we do not really follow Him, though professing our willingness to do so.

For many of us even now, work that is simply remunerative has no real moral character. We may indeed wonder what the result would be if all Christians were to decide for the perfection required of the rich young man in Luke xviii. ; but we do not feel the demand to be one that compels us to withdraw from our moral duties. The words of Jesus, however, which urge us to forsake earthly possessions, do also strike at the root of moral obligations that bind us all—namely, the arrangements of human society. Such an attack is implied in the demand that we should, in order ourselves to attain to a higher grade of morality give away the goods, the time, and the strength that we possess ; for we are well aware that all these belong, not to ourselves alone, but also

to those who are more or less nearly related to us by the established order of society. When Jesus speaks as though these possessions were our own absolute property, and might therefore without scruple be given away, He disregards the social institutions by which we are particularly bound to individual men. The fact that He treated these institutions as of slight account, of itself separates Him from us. But He goes much further than that; for with incisive words he summons men to loose themselves from these bonds. Consequently, those who proposed to follow Him would soon feel that family ties are fetters to be cast off; and failure to throw them off would mean separation from Jesus. He who does not find something to hate in his father and mother cannot be Jesus' disciple (Luke xiv.).

To us the repudiation of the State by Jesus is even more impressive, because more easily understood. Those who disallow the use of force, and authority based upon power, not only take no part themselves in civil life, but are fundamentally opposed to the State, since it must, according to their view, of necessity be wrong. The dissemination of such views tends to the downfall of the State, for to act on the principle of non-resistance to evil, and

so refuse the legal remedies offered by the State, is to reject the State itself as devoid of any value.

Thus Jesus brings us into conflict with social duties to which we all wish to cling. Our ambition is greater than merely to care for our own family, and so vindicate the sanctity of special ties that bind us to particular people. We wish also to preserve intact family life in general, as an indispensable means of morally developing every member of the human race. We call by the name of Father the eternal Power of Good, and so suggest the idea that the relation of parent and child reflects that light and warmth in which alone the youthful soul may grow and thrive. We see quite clearly too that the highest relationships, and those most full of meaning, between the individuals of any considerable group of human beings could not come into being, if their social life did not lead at the same time to the growth of the State.

Had human nature not recognised as rational the existence of the State, the varied powers of individuals must have been mutually destructive, instead of complementary. While, however, establishment of law conduces to liberty as a whole, by affording free scope to social morality, it will, in particular instances, be felt

to be a constraint. Consequently, it becomes permanent and effective only when subject to a ruling power. We are the more ready to serve this power, the more we realise that the good we desire in our own hearts is helped to win its way without by enforced order. At the same time we know that law itself has a right to exist only as a means designed to promote contemporary social life, and so we are anxious to co-operate in the alteration and expansion of the law. Not content with bemoaning the hardships that exist, we make use of the power at our disposal to change the rules of the State and make them more or less stringent, to suit our needs. But to Christians who wish not merely to reverence the words of Jesus, but also to obey them, withdrawal from this struggle between rival powers in the State appears to be necessary, because no political measure can be carried that is not oppressive to some. Yet how reconcile this with the temper that hopes through meekness to prevail? It is a strange way of obeying the words of Jesus: "So shall it not be among you." A Christianity that enforces its own advance seems to admire what Jesus says, and to do the opposite.

Such ideas as the foregoing have again and

again been mustered afresh, and addressed as passionate reproaches to the Church, on the ground that, while venerating Christ as God, it treats His words as though He were powerless against the world he claimed to have overcome. Even in our own Evangelical community at the present day there are ready listeners to such complaints. There are always amongst us still those who regard as mutually exclusive, obedience to the words of Jesus, and a compliance on serious moral grounds with civil obligations. We know no magic spell able to calm and clarify this ferment of confusion, but our own effort may enable us quietly to recognise the antithesis, without letting it separate us either from Jesus, or from those civil pursuits to which we are sure that God has called us. It is a vital question for Christianity, whether we can acknowledge Jesus Christ to be indeed our Leader. Yet neither the primitive Church, nor Protestantism in its early days, was able to explain how we could all, with an open heart, follow our Leader; and even now, it is from the very men who clamour loudest for absolute earnestness in following Jesus, that the beginnings of a right understanding of the matter meet with the most violent opposition. One obstacle to such understanding is a misuse

of the moral directions of Jesus, secured in its position at an early date by the appearance of being a particularly zealous form of Christianity. With regard to this misuse, two things must be kept distinct—the circumstances, namely, to which it owes its origin and its support. Its main support is to be found in the fact that there was no clear knowlege of that historical situation from which the words of Jesus—viewed as the words of a sincere and earnest man—in large measure derived their meaning. Its origin is due to an extraordinary neglect of the Person of Jesus Himself.

In the early days of Christianity, the first step was the perception of the fact that life and work in civilised society are in blunt contrast to many directions of Jesus. The Church proceeded to deal with this fact by assigning the two indispensable and irreconcilable sets of duties to two distinct classes of Christians. One of these was, within certain limits, to devote itself to the acquirement of power and possessions, while the other was to apply itself to obeying seriously the directions of Jesus. The former provided the necessaries of earthly life, but received something higher in exchange; for, in order that they too in their station, and in spite of their extremely defective obedience,

might be saved, by the help of the second class, they were brought into union with Christ and into touch with salvation. Thus the very contradiction which at first had threatened to make the Christianising of society impossible, was afterwards used to promote it. This expedient has two great advantages which explain the fact that to many Christians it still gives satisfaction. In the first place, it is easily understood, in common with the whole system of Roman Catholic ethics, which, according to the "Grenzboten," is distinguished by intelligibility. In the second place, such an arrangement keeps alive the idea that a life spent in imitation of Jesus is something excessively great, calling for efforts surpassing the power of the common run of men. This was a decision equally pleasing to the serious-minded and the frivolous; and as Christian society is usually composed of both classes, it was, and is still, a useful notion. Such a device for embracing two very opposite tendencies is, like Catholicism in general, excellent policy; but the most perfect contrivances of statesmanship are powerless to solve moral problems. The question of morality, for whose supremacy Christendom was supposed to be ripe, was for the time completely shelved.

The conflict between rival claims, the battlefield of which must be the individual conscience, had made way for a conflict of institutions, which was adjusted by the world-dominion of the Church. Acquiescence in this political solution of a moral question, means, however, for serious as for thoughtless men, that they cease to be moral. The flagrant immorality that was always reappearing in the monastic orders, among the would-be "perfect" class, was no mere degeneracy, but was actually a result of the want of discipline inherent already in the principles of monasticism, the worst feature of that life being its very ideal of perfection. Luther it was who first presented in this light the religion and morality of Catholicism, thus bringing discredit on its solution of the problem now before us.

To Luther the radical evil of monastic life was the undisciplined arbitrariness of its aims. Especially noteworthy is the fact that Luther's first thought in the matter was not of disobedience to the commands of Jesus. To him the essential point seemed to be that we should each one consider what are the duties laid upon us simply by the particular powers given to us in our definite place in the world; failure to do so was in his eyes very deplorable self-will.

He felt that for any man to despise the obligations arising out of his natural position in the world means revolt against the will of the Almighty, to whom he owes his existence. The object of the monk is to show perfect obedience; but by evading calls which he cannot but recognise as the voice of God, he becomes wholly disobedient and undisciplined. Other people, faithfully pursuing their ordinary business, do remain in the school of God; but their life, too, is poisoned by the Church, since they are compelled to bear the secret reproach of having failed to choose the way of perfection, though it was open to them to do so. The Church, indeed, encourages them to stifle such self-reproaches; their mode of life is necessary, or at least useful, to the Church, and the perfect way is only recommended, not required. For a considerable time, too, men's consciences may be satisfied thus.

Sooner or later, however, those to whom a measure of Christianity has hitherto sufficed, will have to face the question as to what is absolutely necessary for themselves. If monastic withdrawal from the world is perfection, a man, though admitting the fact, may for a season be satisfied by the doctrine, that God has not done more than counsel such perfec-

tion. But in the end he cannot fail to perceive that this God is a phantom. For the living God of the conscience is inexorable in His demand, that we ought to do what in our own mind we recognise as perfection. He Himself is perfect, and we are to be even as He is. Moral corruption is more intense among the monastics, because, in their dream of perfection, conscience is lulled to rest; amongst the Christian laity, conscience may be actively alive, though only in a state of restlessness and uncertainty. Both lack the open-hearted submission to necessity, that constitutes moral obedience. Self-will leads, in the one case, to vain-glory, in the other to uncertainty.

Although Luther recognised this fact, he had not yet succeeded in solving the problem. He had only pressed home once more upon the conscience of the individual Christian the question as to how he was unreservedly to follow Jesus, and yet take his share of strife and struggle in the world of secular work. Luther had, moreover, found courage to face this question through faith in the Father of Jesus Christ, but he could not show how to settle it. The result of the Reformation on this point was to promote not progress entirely, but als

a reaction, as compared with the Church of Rome.

An Evangelical Church, trying to maintain its position in the world, without the means of coercion Rome had employed, had all the greater need of coherent strength within. But this it could not have, if it was the duty of the evangelical Christian to give himself up to work in the world, and at the same time to hearken to the words of Jesus which forbade him to do so. A Church that had to fight for its very existence could not afford to harbour such an unexplained contradiction. The individual unrest and the battle of intellects caused by tormenting questions, seemed altogether opposed to the resolute bearing so urgently required. Our fathers, therefore, endeavoured to save the Evangelical Church by exhibiting such a dogmatic certainty as also obliged them to suppress to the utmost any idea that, in the sphere of morality, there were questions still unsolved by them. The consequence was that in dealing with the present question they went to even lower depths than Catholic ethics had done. The tendency became habitual to hide, as far as possible, the contrast between the words of Jesus and the secular life upon which men were entering with such vigour. Practi-

cally the same kind of thing is still prevalent among us to-day. But as long as it continues we lack a very important factor in the vital energy of the Church of Rome—an element that is founded on truth, namely, a vivid sense of the above contrast, and an unrest on the part of Christians in their dealings with the world.

We are, however, beginning to rise above the level reached at the Reformation. It will help us to do so if we consider the limitations by which Luther himself was bound when he dealt with the problem. These limitations, insurmountable by Luther, explain why we too still allow ourselves to be perplexed by the contrast between the meekness and compassion of Jesus and our own desire and ready use of power. Rightly understood, the contrast is of inestimable service to us—a fact that cannot much longer be ignored. For the limitations which prevented Luther from perceiving this are gradually being removed, in the case, at any rate, of those who are heirs, not only of his mantle, but also of his life and spirit.

To Luther it was the sacred duty of every man to work in the world to which he belonged, since God has planted him there. Luther's thought was powerfully influenced by the fact

that a Christian may, in the conduct of his life, and in the definite character impressed upon his existence by the force of nature, discern the will of his Creator and Father. The greatness of Luther lay in his keen sensibility towards this revelation of God, a revelation such as a Christian cannot find in the Bible, but must, by inward conflict, gain for himself. For a man to be induced by the statements of certain authorities, to refuse obedience to this revelation, was in his eyes godlessness. He had experienced the power of a faith that is neither custom nor illusion, since it begins when a man has the courage to consider his own position, and becomes serious enough to yield to realities.

In moral questions, on the other hand, Luther was less clear-sighted. *The moral character, or religious sincerity,* did indeed find in him free scope, but his actual ideas on morality were still essentially restricted by Catholicism. He only laid a heavy burden on the false ideals of Catholicism, making it hard for them to survive the due appreciation of that secular work which, according to his view, every individual is bound to recognise as required of him by God. Luther did not overcome that misuse of the moral directions of Jesus, which in the Church of Rome displayed

it full and fatal strength. He, too, takes it for granted that a Christian at least is bound to obey every word of Jesus that has been handed down and was not expressly addressed to a particular individual; without inquiring if the demand it contains really concerns himself in his own particular circumstances. Obedience of this kind is, however, a monstrous misuse of the words of Jesus, and to a Christianity whose aim is to abide in the world, it eventually leaves no choice but a division into clerics and laity, to the moral detriment of both. Thus it is that even on Reformation soil the old weaknesses are wont to reappear, concealing under cover of moral earnestness an entire lack of discipline within. Yet, granted that where such use is made of the words of Jesus, the result is as stated above, we should still have no right to call it an abuse of words, if Jesus Himself so intended them, that every man must blindly obey, even without apprehending the truth they contain. Let us consider the facts.

Undoubtedly Jesus did make demands to which He expected from all His disciples unconditional obedience. But He never required any one blindly and hastily to comply with His words, without understanding them. He asked in every case for something more than this; not

merely submission, but the inward obedience of a free agent. His words are binding upon those who really accept them; and this real acceptance they win by promoting the tendency to independence inherent in the will. Thus the true disciple of Jesus can never throw off the influence of His words, for they have become a revelation of necessary truths.

It is becoming easier for us than it was for our forefathers, or for Luther himself, to gain this right attitude towards the words of Jesus, because to us something has been given that at the outset may greatly depress us. We can listen to the Man Jesus, speaking in His own generation, and addressing His contemporaries. For Luther, on the other hand, it was as yet impossible to grasp the meaning of many of the words of Jesus, simply because the historical study of the Bible, started by himself, was in its infancy. We admire his argumentative skill in exposition, wherever religious vigour alone could reach the root of the matter; and we excuse his deficient explanations, where nothing could avail but the historical method —only developed since by the gradual work of centuries. As long as the Man Jesus could not be seen in historical perspective, it was possible to regard all His words as addressed

to the people of to-day; but the historical research of the present time makes that impossible.

To many this is a source of pain. The Biblical scholar, indeed, the result of whose work has proved of special help to us in this matter, remarks, in reference to the needs of the moment, that we would give anything to have words of Jesus showing how to deal with the political and economic obligations of modern life; yet we possess no such directions.* These sad words of resignation show how easily historians misinterpret the results of their own investigations of the past. The *one great* benefit conferred upon us by their studies is the way they help us to get rid of such longings and regrets. They show us why guidance of *this sort* cannot possibly be found in the words of Jesus. We may grieve if something possible is denied us, but we must reconcile ourselves to what, with our own eyes, we perceive to be impossible.

The Biblical knowledge of the present day teaches us that many duties of social morality, unavoidable by us, were quite unknown to

* J. Weiss, "Die Predigt Jesu vom Reiche Gottes" ("The Teaching of Jesus concerning the Kingdom of God.") Second edition, 1900, p. 145.

Jesus. Thus to Him it was not yet a problem how far the State can give assistance in economic life. More especially, however, He held a view of the world that left Him no concern for the future of human society, for He looked upon this as having in store no future at all, but as being near its end. He saw the beginning of the destruction of the world approaching; He felt the final judgment to be near. This caused Him to overlook many ties whereby we of necessity are bound, and, since He aimed at preparing souls for this approaching glory, He was bound to make of them demands coloured by this expectation. In particular cases, perhaps, it can seldom be determined with certainty how far the words of Jesus are influenced by His expectation of the approaching end of the world; perhaps only one can be mentioned, namely, the prohibition to "lay up treasures upon earth." Laying by so as to enhance our own existence by acquiring a wide control over circumstances is altogether meaningless if a complete transformation of existence and environment is actually imminent. But even with regard to this, every disciple, even though he did not share this expectation, must still have read in these words an urgent warning to himself. Unless he can

detach himself from earthly gain, unless he can say that something incomparably great entirely fills his soul, he is a fool, like the rich man laying up his corn. Only in so far as it is our aim to press all earthly interests into the service of this one true good, as yet unrealised in the present world, can these interests themselves be objects of our desire.

The expectation of an impending change in the established order of things is further shown by the quietly negative attitude with which Jesus passes by the forms and claims of existing civilisation, not finding it necessary to emphasise any feature thereof as important for His followers.

In every other case isolated demands involve, indeed, not rules of universal application, but possibilities that may, under special circumstances, become matters of moral necessity, and are unaffected by the proximity or remoteness of the end of the world. Above all, eager though we may be to turn to full account, in explaining the words of Jesus, His eschatological standpoint, we must not be tempted thus to explain also the command to love our enemies. We cannot think to make this intelligible by saying that the approach of the last day would, with our other wishes,

remove all desire for revenge. The demand to love our enemies is indeed tremendous, and necessarily beyond the comprehension of all but those who, in the Person of Jesus, have found the beginning of a new life; but the fact of Jesus Himself is yet more tremendous. Even to the disciple of Jesus to love his enemies is a task too great for his own strength; yet it is to Him an elementary and, beyond any doubt, morally a perfectly reasonable demand.

It is, indeed, certain that, once our attention is called to the eschatological standpoint of Jesus, we are compelled to make two admissions. In the first place, we feel that a barrier is raised between Him and us by our having honestly to confess that we do not share that standpoint—we are not very greatly affected by the idea of an approaching end of the world. Secondly, circumstances in which we see the promise of a better future, in His eyes were only harbingers of ruin. In Him there was nothing of the zeal of the political and economic reformer.

Grief at separation from Jesus due to these important features in His conception of the world is, however, as nothing compared with our joy at the benefits we receive from God in this knowledge. If one of our links with

Jesus is removed, it is one which He denied us himself. By the dream now disturbed, all our powers are paralysed, even those that really unite us with Jesus, because given by Himself. Sympathy with Jesus and readiness to obey each word that bears His name, is beneficial when He Himself is working in us. It is therefore a rude awakening, when we perceive that Jesus does not respond to this sympathy, and that we must consider for our own selves our actual position. We feel as it were deserted, when first we realise that detachment from all earthly things, to which Jesus in those days invited His disciples, is for us impossible, in the different world in which we live. What for them was a vigorous pursuit of their whole conception of the universe, and consequently sincere, would for us be self-deception, because we do not feel ourselves to be face to face with the end of the world but with innumerable obligations imposed upon us by the world.

Now, historical research, by revealing this difference, prevents us from following Jesus in the same way that those who aim at perfection in the Church of Rome try to do. The result is a great gain, for such supposed imitation of Jesus must eventually produce insincerity. Where it prevails, we find manly energy

expended in restricting men to a childish existence. Seeking to emancipate themselves from the world, people sink into a barbarism that is in truth the highest degree of secularisation of human life. They wish to abandon all struggles for earthly ends, and to be free to serve God; in reality they do but exchange for petty tortures, in a close and narrow atmosphere, those exertions, worthy of their strength, for which God provides in His world such vast opportunities. Where is there more quarrelling than among those who, in all the world, find nothing worth their while to do? Endeavours to imitate Jesus in points inseparable from His especial mission in the world, and His position—which is not ours,—towards that world—efforts like these lacking the sincerity of really necessary tasks, have so long injured the cause of Jesus, that our joy will be unalloyed when scientific study at last reveals to every one the impossibility of all such attempts.

It is true that this impossibility is not yet recognised by all. Friedrich Paulsen* looks upon the name "Tolstoi" as in itself a

* *Deutsche Monatschrift für das gesamte Leben der Gegenwart* (German Monthly Review of Contemporary Life). Berlin, 1903. October issue, p. 125.

proof that it is possible even now so to obey the words of Jesus that one would not shrink from condemning the basis of modern civilisation, the power of the State. It is mostly, we may add, among Protestants that the numerous and enthusiastic admirers of Leo Tolstoi are to be found. They extol him not only as a great artist, not only as a powerful and venerable man, thus according him rightful praise; but they further reverence him as a pioneer in the region of moral thought, as a prophet preparing the way,—and that expressly on account of his so applying the words of Jesus as to destroy the fabric of civilisation. Yet all this is no proof of the practical and moral possibility of absolutely obeying in our rule of life to-day, the traditional words of Jesus. It merely discloses the fact that even yet a want of moral clearness too often allows men to fancy such an attitude to be possible, or actually commanded.

Neither Tolstoi's greatness nor our veneration of him, as a man, need suffer if he may be reproached with a certain lack of moral clearness. In our experience complete freedom from such limitations belonged to One alone,—Who is thereby exalted above us all, and in Whom it was inseparable from the

consciousness of His dignity and mission as Redeemer. It is one of the most encouraging signs of the times that so many people are powerfully affected by Tolstoi's moral greatness. He has given the world of civilisation a gift of inestimable value in the extraordinarily graphic descriptions,—contained, for example, in his "Confessions,"—of his struggle up out of the artistic life of glitter and amusement, and a mere luxuriating in fine feelings, and his decision for a life of action. Even more important are his deeds of sacrifice, and the emphatic witness they bear to the tremendous obligations of those who occupy high places in the world and hear, from depths of misery, the groaning of the multitude.

Nevertheless, we who are Evangelical Christians must not let our gratitude to Tolstoi prevent us from quietly insisting that he misuses the words of Jesus in a manner which, through a weakness in Christianity, has long been familiar to us. Evangelical Christians who extend their admiration of Tolstoi even to this matter are without excuse, except perhaps on the ground that others have not properly revealed to them that new understanding of the Gospel which came into vogue at the Reformation. For Tolstoi, on the other

hand, there is every excuse: he bears the impress of the Russian State, of Russian civilisation, and of the Russian Church. The best feature in the Russian Church is its reverence for tradition, and in this respect Tolstoi is a true son of the Church. All its other restraints he was able by his strength of character to cast off, daring to trust solely in Jesus and His Word. But in the attitude which he takes up towards the precious gift of tradition, he is again overpowered by the forces of Eastern Christianity. Towards the Word of Jesus, where he cannot develop the truth of its meaning, his attitude is one of resignation; for he asserts the necessity of obeying the word of Jesus, as a rule of universal application: "Resist not him that is evil." Yet he does not realise that he himself would be responsible for the disorder that must result from *such* voluntary endurance of wrong and *such* renunciation of the use of force. Such a responsibility does not press heavily upon a Russian Christian: it is overpowered by the consolations of piety; and though he should thus deny the State its right to exist, the matter is one that troubles a Russian less than it would trouble us. For he has obviously not yet reached that point of historical develop-

ment where moral enthusiasts, such as the Apostle Paul, are the first to recognise clearly the moral value in the power of the State. Finally, it is easy to understand why a Russian is ready to accept the words of Jesus about renunciation of the world, for he cannot fail to see on every side the havoc wrought among his people by an exotic civilisation. But what, in the case of this powerful Russian, may be explained by the light of history, ought, for us Evangelical Germans, to be a moral impossibility. Even Friedrich Paulsen will admit that we cannot conscientiously follow a line of conduct suggested to Jesus by an expectation we no longer share. Historical research in this respect has helped to emancipate us.

CHAPTER XI

THE REAL MIND OF JESUS

Of far greater importance, however, than this deliverance from the yoke of a transitory past, is that closer union with Jesus Himself and His inmost thoughts, which is worthy to prevail for ever and ever. Yet it is not by scientific research that this can be attained, but by a moral insight into the moral conceptions of Jesus. Nor can it be denied that from time to time monks, or those who, in their would-be imitation of Jesus, revert to the standpoint of anarchy, do surpass the student of history by retaining closer hold of tradition, and by seeking not merely to know one historic fact out of many but Jesus Christ Himself. In the hearts of individual Christians the spiritual power of Jesus has long supplied what was lacking in Luther's works upon the Church—that moral insight, whereby we still may recognise Jesus as our Leader and perceive the illuminating truth of the words which, if treated as patterns

to be copied exactly, separate men from truth, and so from Christ. A single word of Jesus may kindle this understanding; yet neither any one of them, nor all of them together, can make us realise their truth. This can only happen if we seek Jesus Himself. By this nothing fanciful is meant, but simply the endeavour to understand the mind whence proceeded these wonderful, terrible, and yet gracious words. The words of Jesus, indeed, can be tabulated, but not His moral ideas. For these we can only apprehend when we recognise them as the outcome of a Will that is not something arbitrary, but a mind at peace in eternity.

Of the mind of Jesus and His Person we can gain a clear idea by observing the nature of the moral difference between Himself and those around Him. Does it consist in the principle that righteousness is a matter not only of outward action, but of inward disposition? Is that what is meant by the better righteousness towards which He sought to direct His disciples? But to men familiar with the words of the prophets, "This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me," and with the prayer, "Create in me a clean heart, O God," this distinction surely was not new. In this respect the difference

between Jesus and the righteous of His nation can only have consisted in the thoroughness with which He applied the principle; and this it was that gave Him the right to call them hypocrites. If, however, we stop short at this point, we are far indeed from really comprehending Him in the strength and unity of His mind.

That which is peculiar to the moral thought of Jesus is that He actually develops this principle further, and so for the first time exhibits its full force. He is not content, like the prophets, to attack hypocrisy in the sense of a deliberate discrepancy between what one really is and what one would like to appear; He also exposes its radical nature. Jesus undoubtedly knew that, in the ordinary sense of the term, the Pharisees were no hypocrites—ready, as they were, whenever the inviolability of the law was at stake, to face death at the hands of the Romans. Nevertheless, Jesus did plainly decide that the fearful corruption of their spiritual nature made them ripe for the judgment of hell. He further tells them that they say, but fail to do; nor do they themselves fulfil the demands which they make. But it was not from want of activity, as commonly understood, that they left any duties undone; they were zealous

to the last degree. The thing they lacked was in their eyes of secondary consequence—something for which they had no time, because for them the all-important matter was to fulfil the law with the greatest possible exactitude. To them, therefore, it was not an object of close concern that their will should be sincere and at one with itself, conscious of its eternal right. They did, indeed, aim at fulfilling the law, but only in order to prove themselves righteous, and so to attain something quite different. They wanted to serve two masters—a feat that, according to Jesus, is made impossible by the nature of the will. In seeking to understand in minutest detail a variety of isolated precepts, they overlooked the one essential matter of the law, the demand for justice, mercy, and faithfulness, as a means to genuine fellowship. They were not grounded upon the truth; they neglected that sincerity which must see for itself the meaning and rightful claim of the law, and thus discovers how to fulfil it. They made of the law a burden grievous to be borne, but did not themselves feel its weight, because it was easy for them to satisfy unintelligible demands, and because they rightly saw how possible it is to finish and *be quit of* such tasks as are not understood.

They imagined they really did well-nigh fulfil the law, and looked upon themselves as profitable servants. Meanwhile they were preventing its moral ideas from taking effect, because they thought it not worth while to investigate their truth.

The morality of the Pharisees still flourishes among us. Of the leaders of thought in our nation many are horrified at being told that a man can do what is good only if his will is directed towards the pursuit of truth, as he himself perceives it. They say that, on the contrary, we require "objective" ordinances, telling us quite definitely what we have to do. If they meant that there is general need of law, custom, and personal authority, they would indeed be right. To ignore the fact is as childish as it is dangerous, for only in the peace and order due to these forces can the good make progress among us. What such leaders of our people mean, however, is that to obey these authorities is in itself to do that which is good, and, worse still, that we arrive at a knowledge of the good by deducing it from laws impressed upon us by nature and by history. They therefore declare that they have no eyes to see for themselves what is good. Yet these blind leaders of the blind are

full of honest zeal, although different in kind from that of the Pharisees, who are otherwise their prototypes. They at least direct the people towards Jesus Christ,—a fact we acknowledge with gratitude and wish to turn to account.

Only by observing how Jesus goes to the root of the insincerity and indolence underlying this conception of morality can we see clearly the meaning of his moral ideas in their bearing on ourselves.

In the course of His unrelenting war upon the self-deception of the righteous men around Him, He reveals beyond dispute the source of inward sincerity and singleness of purpose. This, according to Jesus, is implied in the nature of volition. We can only will one thing. Contrive as we may, we cannot serve two masters, and if we persist in attempting it we end in insincerity and enter into conflict with a law within ourselves, the truth of which is evident. Just as the eye must needs be single, not wandering hither and thither, but fixed simply upon one point, if it is really to give to the organism the necessary light, so the whole inward man is full of darkness unless the will can concentrate its every impulse in one direction, in the thought of one eternal goal.

But in order to do that we must know the goal. Did Jesus perhaps think that His mission consisted in showing men where to find it? Not so. He knew that the essence of the law was known throughout Israel, the commandments enjoining love to God and to one's neighbour—both comprised in one. He knew too that, after all, it is easy to draw from every man the acknowledgment of who his neighbour is, and that consequently when any is unmerciful he is self-condemned at the same time. Jesus aimed rather at proving that by no word coming to us from without can we come to know what is good; the undeviating direction of our will must receive its impulse from within. For this purpose He employed a twofold method: in the first place, as against mere piety, He vindicated the claims of moral righteousness, and in the second place he explained the meaning of love.

It is indeed certain that in a manner altogether unique Jesus lived in the thought of God as all in all, our one and only good. For, when at length He saw in His own victory the coming of the Kingdom of God, for Him this meant solely that blissful future, whose necessary condition is that God alone shall reign within us. All good things that do not exactly

draw us nearer to God prepare the way for our destruction. We can attain to freedom, life, and goodness, only if we renounce all else for the sake of God. True righteousness is love of God. But from these fundamental principles of piety the conclusion came to be drawn that our supreme duty is obedience to the traditional will of God,—a procedure whereby we are exposed to a danger terrible indeed, since it leads to a form of piety fatal to any moral clearness. For, amongst commandments handed down as expressing the will of God, there is always a tendency to rank those highest which set forth our immediate duty to God. It necessarily follows that precepts relating to the cultus assume greater prominence than commandments dealing with conduct towards other men. This Jesus found in those righteous enthusiasts round Him who with ever greater care, strove to develop and elaborate the rules delivered to them for the service of God. But in His eyes the righteousness of such a method of serving God was subversive of a living service; He saw in it the carcase round which the eagles are gathered together.

Jesus will not hear of our allowing the claims of the cultus to thrust aside the duty of ministering to the needs of any committed to our

charge. His stern condemnation of conduct of that kind is shown in the example of the pious son, who might thus excuse himself for refusing succour to his aged parents, if what might have been of service to them was offered to God as a sacrifice. In this passage in Mark vii., Jesus calls attention to the discord produced within, when a distinction is drawn between parents' needs and God's demands. Yet why should regard for parents take precedence of cultic observance, since that, too, is included in the Mosaic law? Because, it might be replied, the prophets already had said that mercy is better than sacrifice. Of this teaching there was doubtless, in the days of Jesus, a vivid recollection in Israel, as is clearly shown by the Scribe mentioned in Mark xii.; yet under the fostering care of these Scribes there had sprung up and flourished a religion whose life involved the death of morality.

Jesus was the first to show how to overcome this monstrous state of things. Once we hold that nothing can tell us what is good but a tradition given by God, religion will preponderate over the moral sentiment in a manner fatal to itself. Our only safeguard consists in perceiving that moral earnestness,—in other words, sincerity of the will,—is the first step

in that religion wherein the living God is truly sought. The Biblical expression for religion is: Trust in God, Love for God. Genuine trust in God consists in feeling oneself to be a child of God; and love for God consists in setting before one, as the one final object of one's will, such union with God as implies desire to become a child of God. Now, according to Jesus, this can only be attained by moral obedience, by such love for one's neighbour as is unmoved by the enmity of men. Thus he looks upon moral discernment as a primary element in all true religion. We cannot love God unless we have begun to feel that inward peace which culminates in the love of our enemies. It is impossible to long for God Himself, if we know not what is good: for God alone is good. If we are to find and follow God, we must recognise the good. Thus Jesus attacks the mistaken idea that, in order to recognise the good, we must first know God, and understand His commandments. To those who hold that view, He puts the question: (Luke xii.) "Why even of yourselves judge ye not what is right?"

The same truth Jesus has deeply impressed upon us by His explanation of the commandment as to love. The moral ideas of Jesus are

surely especially those that unfold the meaning of this love which constitutes the unity of His mind. But to attain a real understanding thereof, it is not sufficient simply to point out that it is a love of God which is also love of one's neighbour, and a love of one's neighbour which is at the same time love of God. For that does not as yet reveal the characteristic temper of love. Jesus, to show this, explains wherein it differs from mere just dealing. This method of elucidating the matter has, it is true, not infrequently served to obscure it. Thus it may easily appear that the nature and operation of love are distinguished from stern justice by greater laxity. But that is not at all the love that Jesus means. Of this love we may attain a clear conception by noting wherein it differs from justice; and the first distinction is that it is more stringent than any justice. Justice admits exceptions; love knows none. Justice has no one constant aim, but follows the changes of human nature revealing themselves in history. What may at some future date be justice it is impossible to tell. Love is ready, indeed, with unwearied versatility, to adapt itself to every impulse; but its aim is unalterably directed to a goal it knows—namely, a personal fellowship, wherein

all feel in each other a happiness which surpasses every other joy. The will to love seeks to produce and intensify such fellowship around it, recognising this as its eternal goal, and regarding it as unthinkable that it could ever will anything else. The peace of mind produced by a clearly perceived and constant goal makes the will to love both stronger and sterner than any form of justice. The love that Jesus means must be thought of as the highest exercise of will-power, the concentrated force of a mind that knows the object of its will When Jesus calls upon men to love their enemies, He is not asking them to do something extraordinary,—something marvellous, and impossible to understand; but to give a clear example of that exercise of will whose sole object is personal fellowship. Such purpose is supported by the clear discernment of its own eternal law; and consequently is not loss of individual life, but the most intensely concentrated and living action of the will.

Love is in the second place distinguished from justice by the character of its motives. Legal obedience is always induced by definite enactments; love is not. A will dependent on such impulse from without is not of the nature

of love. Genuine love takes its orders from itself. The fact that others set before us the goal of true personal fellowship, cannot determine us to lead a life full of love; for this goal, standing fast in its right for ever and ever, can be understood only by one who is full of love, and by free choice makes it his own. Again, as love is the recognition from within of an eternal goal, it is guided step by step by its self-determined course. What it itself judges to be, in its especial circumstances, the best way to reach the eternal goal, must always be its way; it is acquainted with no other. Should it submit to any other laws, either its free confidence would be overcome by fear, or its energy sink into indolence. Though, like the heroic Pharisees, a man suffer martyrdom for his faith, that is, for obedience to the law, if he has not in himself something of this sincerity and independence of love, according to the Apostle Paul, he is nothing.

Now it is true that, in point of time, love begins in every case only when a man experiences love. Whence the ceaseless efforts of Jesus to rouse men to a sense of the unfailing love actually experienced by them. But, once this dawning consciousness has done its quickening work, a man possesses life within

himself. Then will his activity no longer be based, like mere just dealing, upon regard for his own interest, which might be advanced by promoting the welfare of others; nor upon promptings of sympathy, arising from a fellowship already established. Once love has come into being, its operation is entirely self-determined. It cannot accept laws from without, but from its own inner consciousness lays down the law for itself. It is no longer dependent on an object worthy of love, as it was at the outset, when it was first kindled, but, like God's sun, freely and abundantly scatters abroad its peculiar riches. To it the sublime calmness of creative power belongs; its nature and its force are divine. Jesus teaches that this is so; and yet He says that love, and love alone, is required of every man. The fact that Jesus can demand it, because He knows there will spring up this free and active power of love in those who gather round Him, and in whose lives the light now shines through His manifestation of Himself:—this is what Redemption means for us.

In the third place, the scope of love is unlimited; its work is never at an end. Any duty which we may hope to finish and have done with, is not a moral duty. Those whose

sole knowledge is of finite tasks, have not yet attained to the inward life and liberty of a moral frame of mind. The accomplishment of anything felt by love to be a duty, leads to new obligations, greater than the last. If any man, striving after fellowship with those amongst whom he is thrown, imagines he can set any limits to his labours, that man's will is not yet moral in its nature. If genuine fellowship with others is really the sole object of our will, we shall content ourselves with nothing less than an infinite capacity for service. We shall then be prepared for the possibility of having to disregard all boundaries whereby our rights are fenced, if we would be able to fulfil our purpose of serving the community. If real love is ours, we are ready for any sacrifice that may establish a common bond of kinship between ourselves and those around us. That is the self-denial to which we are called by Jesus; not a meaningless abandonment of our own individual powers, but the exerting of them to the utmost, the willingness to give them all to the great cause. What arises on this foundation is no mere "frame of mind in fashion like a house of cards;" for where service is of this kind it is upon an open recognition of necessity that a man is built up.

If he is a Christian, he rejoices in the promise that his sacrifice is the key to those riches of the world that quicken the heart of man to its deepest depths.

The mind that is alive in Jesus, and that He requires of us, is rooted and grounded in the knowledge that one thing alone is good,—a will intent upon the fellowship of self-conscious beings,—in other words, love. This mind, in accordance with His explanation of love, is uniform, independent, exhaustless volition. Its crowning-point is the perception that this will is the power over all, is God. When we have so understood the mind of Jesus and the unity of His moral ideas, we may return to those words of His which seemed to require that we should utterly renounce what to-day we can separate no longer from the obligations of social morality, namely, the pursuit of power and possessions. We shall now be able, in explaining them, to avoid former errors.

Above all, a fallacy underlies the very desire to derive from these words "the moral conceptions of Jesus." The attempt might be permitted in the case of a confused and indolent thinker, who may possibly be the recipient of certain inspirations containing luminous moral ideas. But if we have at least come to know

Jesus as a person full of moral clearness and vigour, it should be obvious that in seeking His moral ideas, we must look to the unity of His mind, before asking the question how, in relation to His whole mind, and the circumstances of the case, such and such individual sayings are to be understood.

The particular circumstances in which the words were spoken require careful consideration. But this does not mean, as some modern historians sometimes contend, that it is mainly in the anticipation of the approaching end of the world that the key is to be found to those words of Jesus which run counter to the way of thinking common among men. We cannot, of course, deny that this expectation had a certain amount of influence; but the characteristic note in the words of Jesus is due above all to His intentness upon the eternal goal, whereby the verdict is determined in the day of judgment. As a natural consequence of such intentness on the end, it follows that no intervening objects can be unreservedly, and so in all sincerity, objects of the will. It ought in any case to be impossible to include among the words explained by the idea that the end of the world was approaching, those dealing with the love of peace. Yet they have

been said to express the unapproachable exaltation with which one who is set free from a perishing world can face his enemy; and accordingly, not really to refer to the will to help that enemy, and establish relations with him, in order to win him over. In like manner, the saying concerning the blow and its requital has been explained as meaning willingness to suffer further. But such an attitude towards an enemy or offender would, if not merely in harmony with the action, but actually the motive for it,—imply a lack of love. Could Jesus have been induced to take such a view by the imminence of the end of the world, and of judgment? Such an expectation might cause Him to overlook anything else, but surely not the judgment itself, wherein every one is condemned who has not love.

The most wide-spread and worst mistake in interpreting these words consists in taking them all as laws, to be fulfilled in every case. That is impossible; for they can in no way be deduced from the mind of Jesus as universal expressions of His unchanging will. His own demeanour in His intercourse with men shows that it was not His purpose to present in Himself such an abnormal type of humanity, nor yet, for the sake of heaven, to make of His

surroundings a barren wilderness. Had He meant these words to be universal rules, He would have been worse than the rabbis whose teaching He opposed. Hillel, with his scruples about the lawfulness of eating eggs laid on the Sabbath day, would, in comparison with Jesus, have been a charitable exponent of the law. Such a conception of the words of Jesus is possible only to those who wish to explain His words without troubling about Him, since it is sharply opposed to the moral consciousness of Jesus which he wished that others too should possess.

Those who, in spite of that, cling to these demands, as to rules of universal application, have not yet asked themselves the question, What is the way in which the mind of Jesus Himself directs us? They cease from really following Jesus, in order that they may obey words whose bearing as words of Jesus they have not understood. True following of Him is possible only if we become like-minded with Him, and if, having this mind in us, and sharing his independence, we aim in our own station, at the eternal goal. But if we are willing to obey any words we hear, merely because they are traditional words of Jesus, even though we do not recognise His mind,

that is to say Himself, in them—by so doing, we are resisting the person who sought to unite us with Himself, and to save us from the darkness of self-deception.

In this matter it will be hard to give up the long-accustomed habit of an insincere obedience; for that requires nothing beyond the reach of our purely human powers, and makes it possible for us to be satisfied with what we do, and rest upon our labours. On the other hand, the independent, originative, self-sacrificing love, that really is required of us, transcends the limit of our power. We can understand its moral necessity, and therefore we condemn ourselves when we perceive that we have it not. Yet we cannot gain it unless those conditions within us have been made favourable to its growth; until that has happened, the idea of it will suggest that it would rob us of all joy and peace. If, then, we still desire to take Christianity seriously, our obvious course is to turn aside from that which, in its inexorable severity, is morally intelligible to us, and rather try to follow that unusual course which Jesus seemingly demands of us in many isolated sayings. It is a device that the more readily occurs to one because of the secret thought that the stern necessity of

things will take care that such an attempt does not result in anything more than a mere dallying with the absurd.

But that such feeble trifling has nothing to do with Christianity is clear when we recognise that the whole force of Jesus' soul is concentrated in a love which is ready for any sacrifice. He who cannot summon up the will to be like Him in this, is none of His. He who can, on the other hand, becomes quite indifferent to the claim that he should let himself be enslaved by what in some of the words of Jesus seems to be incomprehensible. For he knows that, were he to submit to such disturbance and confusion within, the effect would be disastrous; it would mean separation from Jesus Christ.

So far, however, are the words themselves from being useless, and much less disastrous, that they are a magnificent proof of spiritual freedom and power. Let us consider first any passages whereof the key is to be found in expectancy of the approaching end of the world. It is such words, and the whole attitude of Jesus upon this point, that reveal His wondrous energy. Everything dictated by this conviction He carries out as a matter of course, and expects His disciples to do the

same. Friedrich Naumann, in his "Letters on Religion," * has shown in an excellent way how unreasonable, as compared with this, is the attitude of those modern Christians who feel bound to share the eschatological standpoint of Jesus, but take good heed not to treat the things of this present world with indifference and as though they were not likely to continue. With regard to these utterances of Jesus, we confess that we cannot possibly comply with them, since we do not share His conception of the universe, and so are living in a different world. On the other hand, the mind which they reveal should be present also in us; that is, the will really to act in accordance with our own convictions.

Among the other directions of Jesus, those again must be singled out which refer directly to the frank and inexhaustible spirit of love, which is alone required; or to conduct directly resulting from it, such as absolute fidelity to bonds of matrimony, not already dissolved by the sin of one of the parties; or, again, to conduct directly prohibited by it, as, for example, lustful desire, or thoughts of enmity murderous in their intent. In words like these is set before us the law that must unconditionally be obeyed,

* "Briefe über Religion," 1903, pp. 41–42.

because we perceive it to be the expression of moral necessity.

Our position, however, is different with regard to those other words, which require us to renounce possessions and the use of force, including law.

In using such words, Jesus wished in the first place to lead men on to a morality that should not be content to stop short at justice. Thus he attacks the delusion that it is possible to induce moral conduct in a man by a number of regulations curtailing his independence. At the same time He reveals the peculiar character of moral conduct; namely, the fact that it can be engendered only through the free movement of a man's own mind. All sincere action originates in the free will of the agent; and such action alone can be understood as fulfilling the law of love. In order, like Jesus, to insist upon conduct both loving and sincere, it is necessary to combat the indolence that expects to find adequate guidance in what others say. To those who, then as now, have been led by moral insincerity and slackness to look for such regulations, or to imagine they already possessed them, Jesus addresses the words: "But I say unto you." He cannot possibly mean that His aim is to set before them for

the first time right statutes of the same kind. On the contrary, because Jesus wishes to open the way for a right disposition within, He is intent upon destroying the preconceived idea that such regulations could even exist, as would be able, regarded as an external authority, to cover all and sundry occasions of moral conduct. Therefore He demands that, instead of acting on the obvious legal principle of retaliation, encroachments upon property protected by law should not be resisted, but met by voluntary surrender.

Taken as a pattern for exact imitation, is that particularly hard to follow, or not rather very much easier than the serious duties of love? An indolent man could desire no better way of making his morality easy than by regular obedience to such a command. It is true he would not thereby attain to the superhuman; he would sink to the lowest depths. On the other hand, such a demand, if understood as a general rule, is not only extremely difficult, but absolutely impossible for any morally earnest man to fulfil. Therefore, the very men whom Jesus aimed at helping would be obliged to reject this saying, if presented to them as a general rule. Consequently, Jesus cannot possibly have intended it in that sense.

To do so, would have been to act in opposition to His own mind. The fact that Christians have so long overlooked this, and still occasionally seem to forget it, may no doubt largely be due to that pious attitude which was thought to be necessary towards the words of Jesus,—a piety that expressly abandons any attempt to be morally earnest and sincere. When He who emancipates the conscience speaks, people think it unnecessary to inquire how His words can be understood as the expression of strict sincerity and earnest love; and thus Jesus, who was so full of sincerity and love, is made responsible when people seize upon His words, without any question as to sincerity and love, and suppose that by time-serving they can draw nigh to Him.

By such words as these, Jesus aimed at explaining, to all who have ears to hear, that demands may be made upon them so inexorable as to preclude any otherwise justifiable recourse to law. They arise out of particular circumstances wherein the disciple of Jesus has his Master with him, and the power of the mind of Jesus is suggested by the way in which He breaks down every barrier. We hold fast therefore to these demands, as capable at any moment of becoming practical for us. But as

rules of universal application we cannot accept them. If we tried to obey them as general rules, we should in so doing cease to follow our Guide; for we could not find in them the Jesus whom we know. His power and His greatness shine forth, on the other hand, in the thought that none can be protected by his legal rights against the claims of moral necessity.

If then the words of Jesus be understood as due to His mental outlook, they will not obscure the fact that the pursuit of power and possessions, as protected by law, is a moral obligation. Unless, in particular circumstances, love requires us to sacrifice these things, it is our moral duty to do battle for the conditions under which we exist on earth. Those who feel that Jesus not merely summons them to earnest self-examination, but also hinders them in the fulfilment of this duty, surely make Him a kind of Jewish rabbi, who would keep us in the leading-strings of ordinances, and sustain us with something incomprehensible. Friedrich Naumann truly says: "He who considers that conduct alone to be Christian for which he can quote direct words of Jesus, must no longer be in favour of maintaining the State by a system of armed force" (*op. cit.* p. 48). Certainly any

one who thinks of Jesus as a Jewish law-giver will be able to find a "complete" Christianity only in monasticism, or in Tolstoi's paths of anarchy. If he cannot decide in favour of these, he must, like the Catholic laity, be content with a semi-Christianity. In some of his statements Naumann himself seems to reach this result. When, for example, he says, "Not all fulfilment of duty is Christian" (*op. cit.* p. 42), he seems to mean that our moral consciousness may lead us beyond the limits of Christianity. In my address at Darmstadt I understood him in that sense; and many will still take him to mean that Christianity is far too kindly and gentle a force to co-operate in the human struggle for existence; that the character of Jesus is made up of compassion and modesty, love and asceticism; and that conseqently He is no leader for men who with the means given them in this world wish to attain some definite object. Perhaps it is a good thing that Naumann, with his incomparable gift of discovering the secret thoughts of the soul and speaking to the hearts of men of the present day, does give the general impression that in his own case an exceedingly rich and spiritual Christianity and resolute pursuance of secular work are clearly distinguished. For in this way he helps to pay

off an old debt, incurred, not indeed by Luther, but by Lutheranism.

We must not overlook the judgment implied in the hard sayings wherein Jesus tells His disciples that it is necessary to renounce power and possessions. Unless we are ready to sacrifice that which is safeguarded by the law, we are false to our own manhood. To earn and enjoy all the gifts of civilisation is not the life appointed for man, the life that Jesus lived, and wished to reveal to His followers. The really free and fruitful life of the spirit prevails, not in all those forms of civilisation whereby we seek to enchain and dominate nature, but in a self-sacrificing love, produced in us after we ourselves have experienced an inexhaustible Love or become conscious of God. To man, called to be free, all those other good things are as much a menace as a help.

They are a means to life; but those who are troubled and anxious about them are in constant danger of forgetting life itself, in their pursuit of these means. The extent of the risk is proved by the fact that it is generally in the State, especially in foreign policy, that the dangers of power first appear, while those of possession become noticeable in the higher grades of finance. The noble folly of the cry

"Disarm!" would be just as much in place in the field of competition as in that of real warfare. It is hard to say on which arena the violence is more terrible, the suffering worse. The Christian must never forget that the results of his labour—industrial, scientific, artistic, political—open up an abyss that threatens to engulf his future. The only salvation for his personal life lies in the power of his moral consciousness to impel him to something higher than all this pomp. Where this strong attraction to the other world is missing, Christianity is at an end. By it the difference between the Christianity possible to-day and that of primitive times is lessened, for in this respect both must needs be alike.

At the same time, let us thank God that such distinction is not wholly swept away. Through its existence we are detached from that which was transient in Jesus, to be the more closely united with Him who abides for ever and ever. When we perceive that the world in which we are placed is different from that of Jesus, we are prevented from allowing the dead circumstances of His life on earth to hide from us Him, the living mind, that overcame His world, as we must overcome ours.

In early Christianity there are two points of equal importance to us,—the typical extreme of energy with which men sought another world; and an aversion to the tasks of civilisation, such as we cannot seriously, and therefore should not, desire. The first of these is a powerful reminder to us, but so too is the second, and the second is far more apt than the first to be disregarded by us. At the present time there can be few Christians who would not readily echo the following words of Friedrich Paulsen: "Even for us who are representatives of a modern civilisation, there would be something lacking if primitive Christianity, with its supramundane and unsecular ideas, were to die out altogether. Christianity mingles with the civilised life of modern nations something quite different that keeps it within the bounds of healthy moderation; like salt it preserves it from corruption. Since Jesus appeared on earth, a change has taken place: men can no longer be engrossed entirely in this world. Just as for us it is possible no longer to worship power, and deify the State or the representative of political authority, so we have ceased to devote ourselves entirely to power and possessions, to pleasure and to culture; in other words, we are no longer

entirely satisfied by the benefits of civilisation. With Christianity there has been implanted in the soul of the Western races of humanity a new feeling, the feeling for another world, a world different from all that here gladdens and saddens the hearts of men."* Would that among the men of modern civilisation many really felt this working of Jesus in themselves, and had sufficient conscientiousness to give Him His due! At any rate, we are grateful to Paulsen for his excellent statement of the case.†

It is, however, even more important to ponder the meaning of the fact presented in the distinction here drawn, and actually made in history, between Jesus and His mode of life. Our

* "*Deutsche Monatschrift für das gesamte Leben der Gegenwart*" (German Monthly Review of Contemporary Life). October 1903, p. 126.

† My thanks are due also to several who took part in the discussion at Darmstadt, such as Pastor Christlieb and Licentiate Weinel, as well as to Dr. Rade for his article in the *Christian World*, for the way in which they insisted on renouncement of the world as a vital cord of Christianity, and endeavoured to supply what, in my address, they evidently felt to be lacking. They may rest assured that I would willingly have dwelt upon the subject with as much stress as they, but, in an address already too long, I was not able to treat of every important matter with equal emphasis. At the same time, the point on which they lay stress was not omitted entirely.

attitude towards the world cannot be that of Jesus; even the purpose to will that it should be so is stifled in the air that we breathe to-day. The state of affairs is very clearly described by Naumann, who says with truth: "Therefore we do not seek Jesus' advice on points connected with the management of the State and political economy." (*Op. cit.* p. 49.) But when he goes on to say: "I give my vote and I canvass for the German fleet, not because I am a Christian, but because I am a citizen, and because I have learned to renounce all hope of finding fundamental questions of State determined in the Sermon on the Mount," we can detect a fallacy. He regards as painful renunciation what ought, on the part of the Christian, to be free decision and a voluntary act. If we have once understood the mind that Jesus wishes to produce in us, we cannot fail to see that we must become as free and independent as He.

As a result of that frame of mind whereby we are united with Him, we desire the existence of a national State, with a character and with duties with which Jesus was not yet acquainted; we will not let ourselves be led astray, even if in this form of human nature various

features are as sharply opposed to the mode of life and standpoint of Jesus as is the dauntless use of arms. We cannot say, then, with Naumann, that, under pressure of troubles from which no living religion is free, we renounce a "complete Christianity." For, after all, complete Christianity is the personal life of discipline and freedom revealed to man in Jesus. Anything in Jesus that we cannot understand as triumphant personal life is not for us part of a complete Christianity, but at the very most of a bygone Christianity. The inward independence that we gain when the good begins to work within us, is protected when we recognise the extent to which, in many points, Jesus' conception of the world has, by the guidance of God, become remote from ours. This result of science and historical research we will not deplore, for it is God's gift to us, and if resolutely turned to account, must put an end to much in Christianity that at present is of a sluggish and timid character. To remove this, we must further free ourselves entirely from the sentimental desire to adopt in our own lives even elements in Jesus which we cannot decide to be eternal. That is a kind of relic-worship that seems to be widely popular in the Evangelical Church, but is assuredly

not in accordance with the mind of Jesus,* though He would regard it in a kindly way, as betokening adherence to Him, if as yet of a hazy kind.

Naumann's full discussion of the question also suggests something else that is necessary if we are to place in their true setting the moral directions of Jesus,—a setting it is essential to understand if we are to make right use of them.

Naumann says our life can never be a life wholly determined by Christianity. It would be more correct to say that it cannot be complete as a whole, because it can never be a life completely determined by morality. We are always in a state of transition from the constraint of a natural existence to the freedom of a personal life. Naumann, in his own way, describes the position admirably (*op. cit.* p. 46): "Go to the Pope, to the chief Court chaplain, the monk, the professor, the pious lady, the pious man of business, the pious peasant, the pious beggar, the pious grey-headed wife;

* Baumgarten, in the *Monatschrift für die kirchliche Praxis* (Monthly Journal of Church Practice), 1903, p. 417, shows clearly that we lose nothing by deciding to hold fast to that Jesus alone of Whom we can honestly say, "The same for evermore." I must protest against just one phrase he uses concerning the "average man, who stands in need of a certain literal legalism." That we all require.

everywhere you will find, bound up with the spirit of surrender and brotherly love, a natural basis of common sense, intent on the struggle for self-preservation." "And now what shall we say? Shall we continually deplore this state of affairs, or simply acknowledge that it exists? Of the two courses, the latter appears to me the more straightforward and sincere. Whatever cannot be altered, must be clearly understood in its full bluntness, before one can be thoroughly reconciled to it. To put it briefly, I know that, in order to live, we must all recognise as the principle of our being, the natural conditions of the struggle for existence; and also that it is only upon this basis that we are free to realise the higher morality of the Gospel, as far as it is possible to do so upon such a foundation" (*op. cit.* p. 46). "The actual circumstances of life are given quantities, and there is but small scope to shape them freely. But it is just within this free space that our personal ego has power to work" (*op. cit.* p. 50). Here is a clear statement of a very important fact, which, to the great loss of Evangelical Christianity in Germany, Schleiermacher failed sufficiently to appreciate.*

* *Cf.* my "Ethik" (Ethics) 2nd edition. J. C. B. Mohr, 1901, pp. 116–122.

Naumann, however, mistakes the nature of this fact. He thinks that in so far as we are subject to such necessity, our union with Jesus suffers; in reality we have to admit that what takes place is quite different. In what we do under this stress of compulsion, as creatures of circumstance or children of nature, we do not realise the good; we are not morally active. Yet as Christians we are not thereby separated from Jesus and His God. On the contrary, we serve Him aright if at the same time we live in the belief that by the Father of Spirits all things are created. Thus we *believe* that, in the stern pressure of circumstances, we experience fatherly care, which requires us to enter into competition with others, *as a condition of real and effective life.* This belief can have no place in us if we do not train the will to do ultimately everything in our power for the service of love, and so raise men higher and bind them to us in genuine fellowship. Now this faith in the power of the good element in real facts is supported and strengthened more by the fact of the Person of Jesus in this world than by anything else. Jesus is therein our Redeemer. For it is a case of redemption, when a man engaged in moral conflict is able with a good conscience to take his part in the

life of nature that he must share if he is to exist at all and to any purpose. In the Words of Jesus the conception of morality, as independent and productive love, is clearly developed; and when the goal of morality was thus disclosed to mankind, a fact was at the same time supplied that brings within the reach of Christians a moral existence upon earth, by leading us to faith in the *power* of this love, or becoming to us a revelation of God.

To live for others of our own free will is possible only at those moments when we can feel that the eternal revelation of God, the victorious power of love, gives us a joy which time cannot impair, nor eternity exhaust. We believe that when men are hampered by a feeling of guilt, and uncertainty as to their fate, God has many ways of setting them free to live for others. Yet the means are ultimately always the same that God uses: the power of personal goodness, which in its self-sacrifice humbles and raises a man at the same time. This memorable experience of moral contact may open our eyes to the redeeming power of Jesus. For we know no personal goodness expressing in such spotless purity the will to sacrifice itself for us, as that of Jesus in His Death. If we are sufficiently in earnest not to

let this fact escape us, an experience will one day be granted us which, for the individual as for the human race, is the beginning of a new life. The sense of being forsaken during an endless night, oppressed by utter loneliness, will cease when the wonderful figure of Jesus compels us to open our hearts. In Him alone in all this world is given to us that pure manifestation of a power to which we gladly unfold ourselves and unreservedly yield. This joyful trust in the mysterious greatness of Jesus is our redemption from moral helplessness. We must indeed ever rouse ourselves afresh, and strive to attain the peace of mind in which this happiness may grow; and, if we do, our joy in the gift of God in Jesus Christ will continually gain strength, and become in us a power to deal honestly with His Words and conform to the knowledge of righteousness to which we are led by them. Then, as the redeemed of Jesus, we shall be united with Him, and really obey His directions. That is a simple account of the substance of the Gospel; any one may understand it who does not shrink from the plain truth of moral facts, and has no desire to ignore the realities around him. But we all need the Gospel; for we all wander in darkness, isolated in our inmost being, till this light shines in our hearts.

We must accept the directions of Jesus, neither as enforced and arbitrary laws, nor yet as mere outbursts of emotion, but as the effulgence of His mind. They are not cords He has wound about us, but clues to direct us to freedom. If in that sense we apprehend them, we shall further perceive that the spirit that moves within them is also that which is truly active in the life of the present time. For the power to assert itself, that is characteristic of life, belongs particularly to this spirit, which is bent only on serving; and the ease with which a living force adapts itself to circumstances is found nowhere so much as in this will to love, invariably intent upon an eternal goal. There can be no doubt as to whether the directions of Jesus can be harmonised with the claims of social morality to-day; but it is questionable whether many as yet are able to understand them. To do so must be difficult for men by whom Nietzsche is "falsely esteemed a philosopher"; and by whom, in their passing moods of disgust with civilisation, Tolstoi is honoured as the prophet of a new era of moral perception. Still harder is it for those who, possessing the Christian tradition, nevertheless are so uncertain and confused that they seek for new revelations

in Buddhism, or even in occultism. Least able, however, to understand the true force of the moral ideas of Jesus,—the unity of His mind,—are the numbers of religious people who are practically tied to the principle of pharisaic morality, according to which certain rules may teach us the nature of the good, and a will that is ready to be bound by them may be accounted good. Yet even among all these, every one will at length understand His thoughts, who draws so near to the person of Jesus that he is conscious of His power to deliver, and becomes free for service as He was. May we Christians, perceiving how little the moral clearness of Jesus has up till now been allowed to operate among us, have our consciences stirred to discontent, and our hearts filled with zeal!

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